ZIFF DAVIS

BEST AND WORST GAMES OF 1997

The #1 Computer Game Magazine World MARCH 1998 NO. 164

Hottest New Codes and Easter Eggs!

TOP STRATEGIES Longbow 2, Jedi Knight, Age of Empires

35 TOUGH REVIEWS Quake II, Blade Runner, Tomb Raider II, Longbow 2, Heavy Gear, Curse of Monkey Island, Madden 98, Men In Black & more!



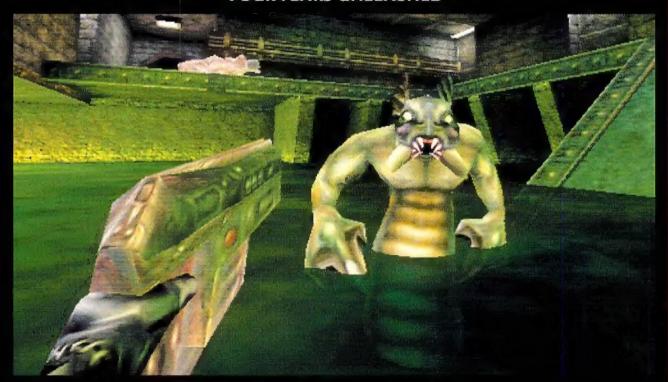
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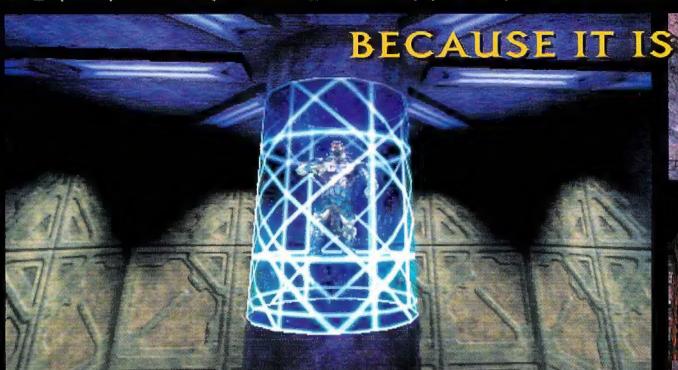












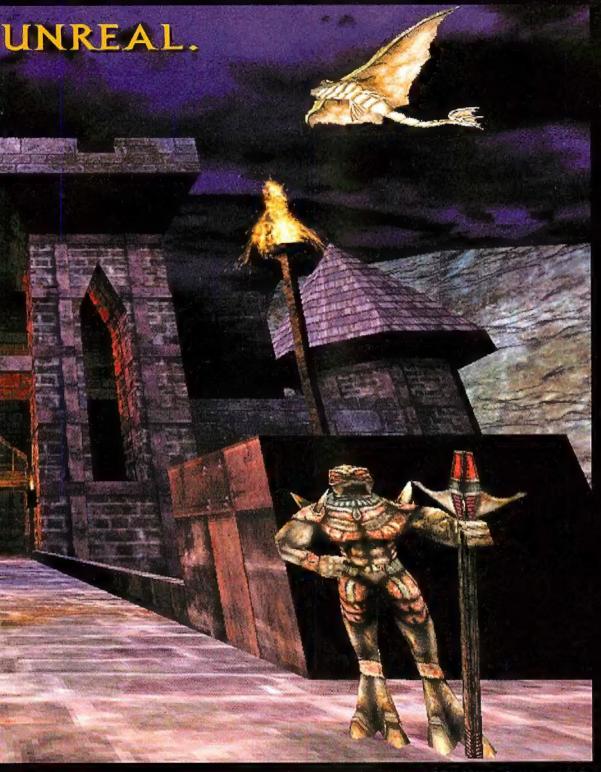
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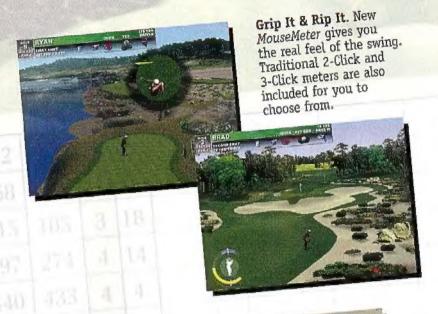
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NEW Artificially Intelligent computer golfers challenge you on the links. Play against opponents who will try to beat you every time you tee up.

NEW TVCam" lets you position the camera anywhere on the course to aim, play and watch your shots.

NEW The course designer is more powerful than ever. Import your own graphics and design custom courses.

NEW Find friends and other players on-line to play against with Accolade's new Game Matching Service.

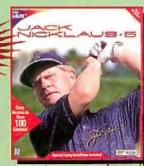
NEW Game physics now allow for uneven and hillside lies as well as ball drop feature.

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JACK VICKLAUS: 5



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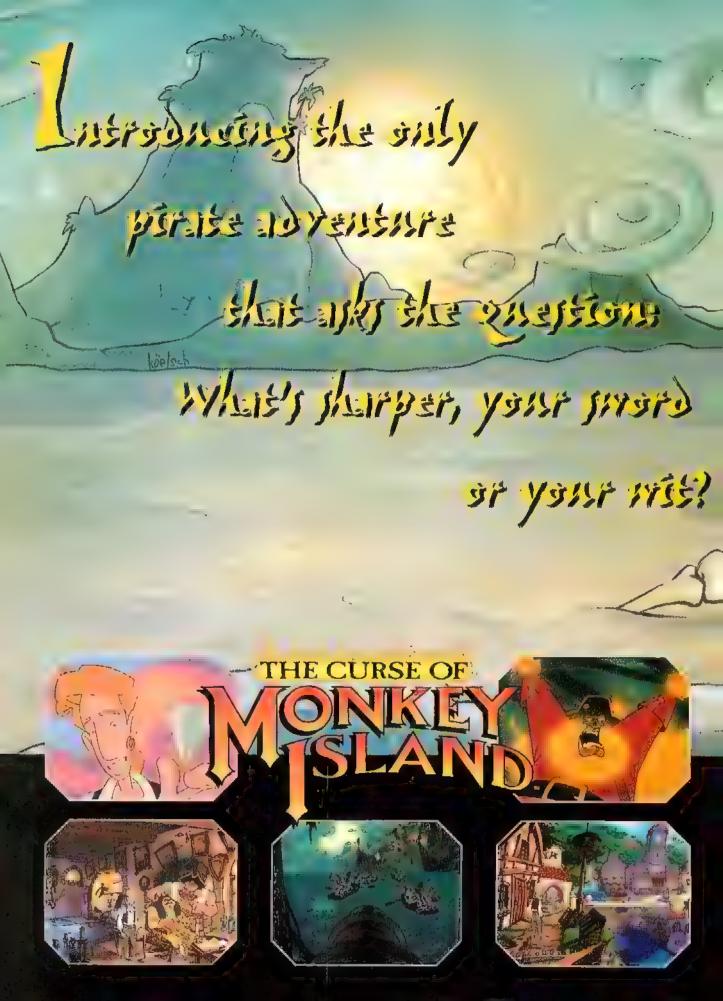


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unlimited ammo, turn the armies massed against you into frothing pools of burnt umber. It's easy! Plus, check out the nifty hacks and Easter eggs we offer for your amusement.

rampant sequelitis, developers still succeeded in creating richer game universes. Of course.

1997 also brought with it some real turkeys, so for the first time, we'll offer our picks for the Best and Worst of the year.

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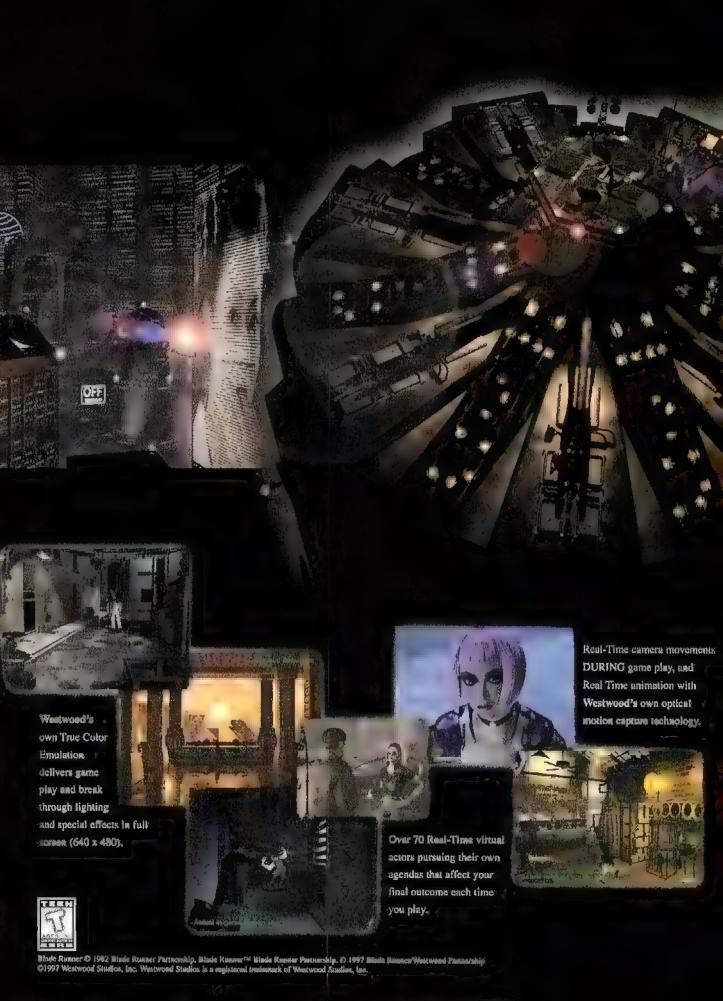














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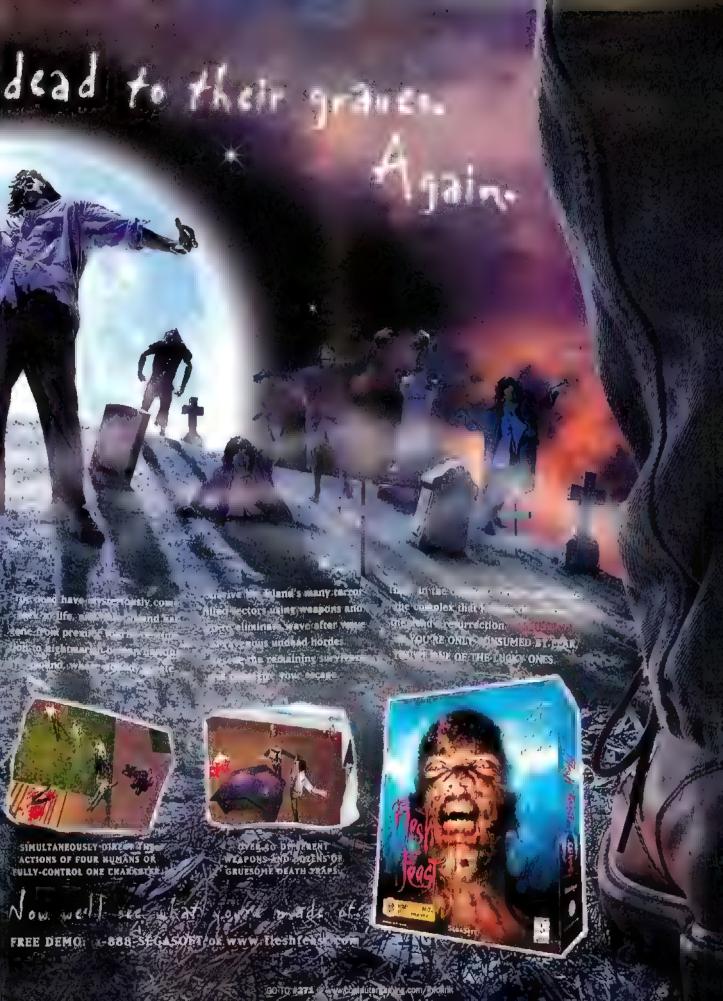
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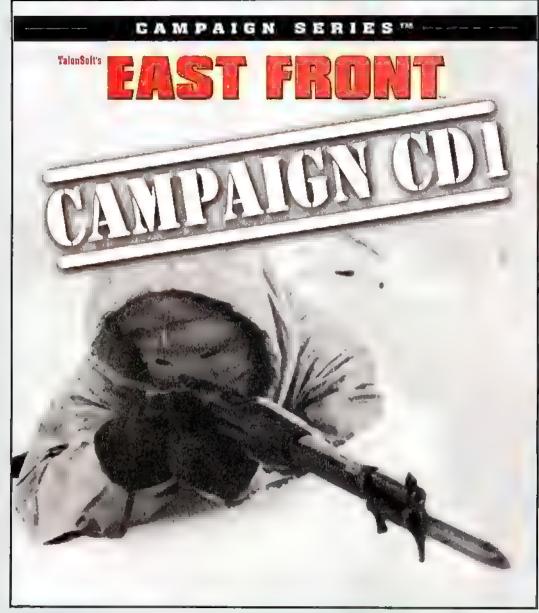
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or the high flyers out there, this month's disk will have you performing loop-the loops.

You've read the previews, now here's your chance to get some hands on experience with FALCON 4.0 before It hits store shelves. We also have a demo of F/A 18 Korea to accompany the review in this issue. Look out, too, for our Wing COMMANDER; PROPHECY demo and experience CGW's Space Sim of the Year for yourself.

And there's also plenty of action for those who prefer to keep their feet firmly on the ground Platform-gamers will fall in love with ABE'S Oppysee while the strategists among you can revel in Deadlock II and Star Command Detuxe. In ASC's Sandarium, adventurers will



WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY Try your hand at this four-mission demo of the game CGW voted best space sim of 1997.

find themselves stuck in a world gone madi-baltling amnesia to discover their true selves. And finally, action gamers can test their tank-combat skills in Sony's TANARUS.

March CG-ROM Titles				
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How to Use the Disc.

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Otherwise ealert thin from the Program Manager in Windows Six, or Surt Mana in Windows Six, and type D:Win-ME (where Disc institute of your CD-ROM drive) to resident from the CD. You may type D:WinSTALL to exempt a CSW program group on your Windows docktop for filters for Many densit require the disc to be in the CD-ROM drive in and therefore may therefore a recommend instabiling the dense. Some contribution of the contribution in the contribution of the contribution



FALCON 4.0 Your chance to get a taste of this, the granddaddy of all flight-sims, before it comes out



DEADLOCK If Check out our own special aliens-designed exclusively for this CGW demo-in the sequel to Accolade's







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CGW's Home on the Web

Turn to GameSpot for the Fastest News and Reviews in Gaming

f you're looking for the best online news and reviews in gaming, turn to the experts at GameSpot. Here's a brief overview of what you can expect on GameSpot over the next few weeks. To see these articles and others, point your browser to the ultimate gaming page at www.gamespot. com/march98

Strategy Guides

GameSpot strategy guides are unoffic at game handbooks, stocked with secrets and step by step instructions on how to defeat each level of your lavorite games. Our strategy guides unlock those unlapped hours of gameplay to help you get more fun for your buck.

Quake II The eagerly awaited sequel is here, and GameSpot has everything you'll need to battle your way through all of the single player levels, discover all the secret areas. and conquer other players with our unbeatable DeathMatch tips.

Age of Empires Let GameSpot guide you through the ages. Our delinitive Age of Empires guide offers expert advice on all units and buildings, and includes walkthroughs of all the missions.

Tomb Raider II While some of you may be quite content simply to watch Lara jumping and shooting her way across your screen, others may be inclined to finish the game. GameSpot's guide to Tome Raider II provides all the lips you II need to make it through the treacherous levels successfully.

Designer Diaries

Ever wonder what's going on behind the scenes while those much anticipated games are in development? GameSpot's Designer Dianes follow the progress of game designers Jane Jensen, embarking on her third Garrier King it game for Sierra On Line and Tim Schafer, currently working on GRIM FANDANCO for LucasArts, on Storm's Tom Hall also provides regular updates on his new game, AMACHRONOX.

CGW Online

Turn to CGW Online for news. reviews, strategy articles, and behindthe-scenes features on hundreds of top computer games. Because of our joint venture with GamcSpot you'll also see some articles posted online before they're in print!

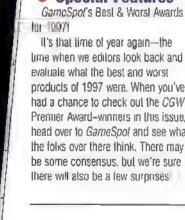
in addition, be sure to watch out for a major new hardware section by Loyd Case: The Uilimate Game Machine.

It's a joint venture from CGW and GameSpot, if you haven't done so already, be sure to add www.

computergaming.com to your bookmark collection.

Special Features

evaluate what the best and worst products of 1997 were. When you've had a chance to check out the CGW Premier Award-winners in this issue. head over to GameSpot and see what the folks over there think. There may



Demos

GameSpot has the most thorough and regularly updated game demo libraries on the Web. You'll find demos of many of the games we've reviewed recently, including TOTA, ANNIHILATION AGE OF EMPIRES HEXEN II. 7th Legion, Fallout IF-16, Shadow Warrior, SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE, and more!



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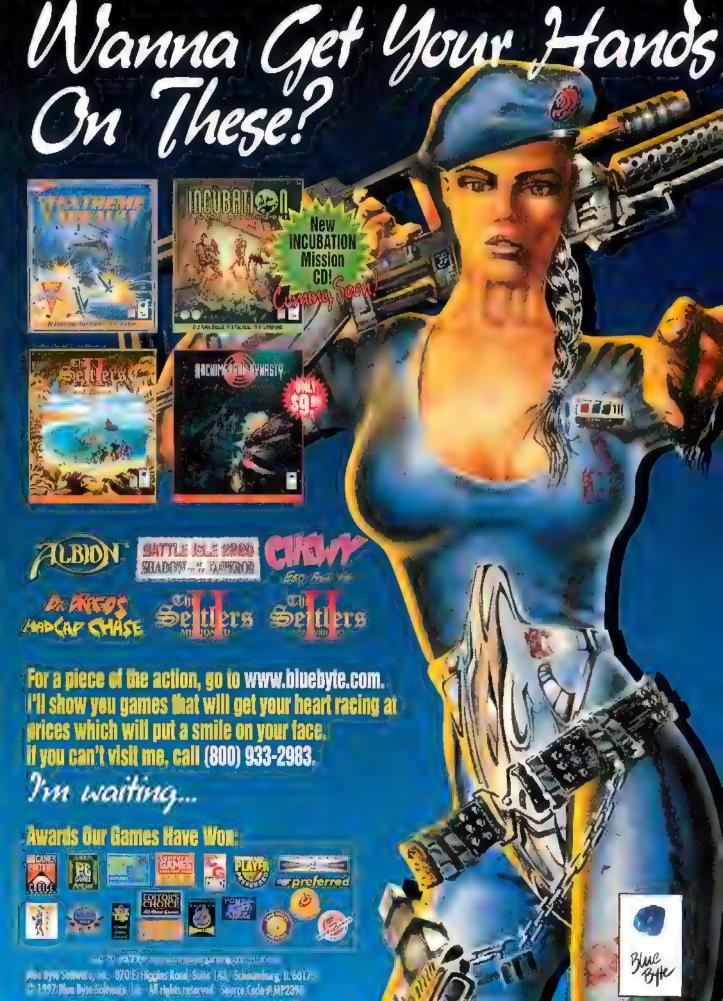
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a christonial Broderiku di Software.



License to Kill

When Do Licenses Help Computer Games—and When Do They Hurt?

harles Ardal
once slammed a
new offering
from a now
defunct publisher by stating that
it had more
licenses to kill
than James
Bond. The com

ment was appropriate. At that time, the prevailing wisdom in the industry was that anyone could sell anything if it had the right license. Many times, those licenses were totally wasted, as the familiar characters from popular books, comics, movies, or television were pasted atop unimaginative games as though they were paper dolls.

Remember Capstone's Home Alone and Homey D. Clown? What about Acciaim's Judge Daedd? It was even worse than the movie. And who could forget the inimitable incompetence of Paragon's Captain America and Spiderman Versus Doctor Doom? Fortunately, most of those publishers have learned their lessons.

Another popular publisher ploy is to license a popular boardgame or role-playing game and convert it to the computer. Unfortunately, such projects often involve producers who care nothing about the existing property and are determined to put their "vision" on the computer game, even if it guts the spirit of the original product. Certainly, such was the case in Paragon's MegaTraveller I, Mindscape's first Warhammer 40K offering (a game so terrible it was

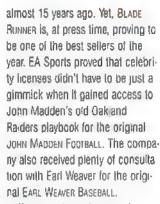
never released in this country—though it was "reviewed" by our competition), and the disappointing handling of the Masic: The Gathering license by MicroProse Indeed, there isn't anywhere near enough room on this page to list the travesties engendered by Advanced Dungeons & Dragons products (once SSI quit publishing the successful "gold box" series).

Yet, licenses can be invaluable. When LucasArts quil licensing its hit film properties to third parties and starting producing games based on its own *Indiana Jones* and *Star Wars* movies, the company became an industry leader almost overnight. Activision cruised

isn't a magic bullet to fix mediocre properties. 77

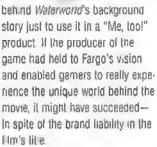
from bankruptcy to success with the Mech-Warrior 2 series as its flagship. When FASA decided to take its property back, Activision wisely found a similar license in Dream Pod 9's Heavy Gear. The new series hasn't started out on quite as high a note as the Mech Warrior 2 franchise, but it has a rich game universe and tons of potential.

Westwood Studios took a terr fic risk when it Ecensed the title from a science-fiction film that came out



If you want counterexamples, compare the limited success of Sierra's EARTHSIEGE series with the MECHWARRIOR 2 franchise, and don't forget the graveyard of unlicensed sports games that tried to take on EA Sports.

What then, makes licenses work? Brian Fardo, CEO of Interplay Productions, once lined out what I believe is the essential success formula, "For me to license a property," stated the exec, "it has to offer a rich enough universe that I would enjoy adventuring in it myself." Unfortunatery for Fargo and Interplay, that state ment was made to illustrate why Fargo had just signed a licensing agreement to produce a game based on Kevin Costner's expensive flop. Waterworld, It is also unfortunate that Interplay opted to merely jump on the realtime bandwagon and take the rich universe



Why do we, as gamers, want to experience games based on other properties? It is simply because we want to experience more of the universe and characters that we enjoyed in the original property. If the producers and designers of the games negate the atmosphere of the original products or put characters in situations that seem preposterous to us, they've done slanili cant damage to our potential enjoyment of the game. However, if they stay consistent with the universe and give us an experience true to the feel of the original property, we will reward them with the praise that counts-continued purchasing over a full product line.

Licensing is not a magic builet to fix mediocre (or worse) proper ties, but it is an important tool in shaping the kinds of interactive worlds in which gamers will want to play. Licenses can be the difference between souless products and soulful products, but they have to be respected &

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

WING COMMANDER: CROTCHETY

Did anyone else notice that the mothership in the Wing Commander Prophecy ad on

> the back cover of the December issue looks like a large pair of gray pants over a pair of purple shoes? And just what is that control tower supposed to be? Looks more like a fathership to me,

> > Matt Slattery via the Internet

Thanks for helping us see this ship in a whole new light Evidently, Origin desperately wants the game to have legs.

FORTUNE SMELLING

As a longtime CCW subscriber, I felt the need to write when I read Martin Cirulis' column about "Fortune Telling" (CCSFF#162, p. 372), In the artiele, Mr. Cirulis points to the "sneak preview" aspect of this and other game mags and ties this in with reviews. Essentially what he is saying is that we, as gamers, have made it nearly impossible to give a blockhister game like STARCRAFT a fair review since we are so hungry for information and it has been "previewed" so many times already What I think he is ignoring is something he has long railed about: reviewer integrity.

He states, "The pressure on any critic is simply to rubber stamp all that has been said." I hih?! Forgive my ignorance here but why are invorable previews (of a product not completed) such a pressure to bias a review? No matter how many good previews a product has gotten, if the final working game stanks, shouldn't a reviewer say so? If STARCRAFT (for example) is a turkey, is Mr. Chulls going to give it four or five stars just because the "previews" have? That's how the article reads to me, as if he were trying to explain "Sorry guys, I was a fair and honest reviewer until large sums of money became involved." Is he not, by saying and implying such things, proving the accusation that many gamers have held for a long time, that reviewers rate games based on the amount of money (in advertisements mainly) the magazine makes? It reads that way to me.

I completely agree with him that we, the gaming public, are far too hot for previews and, generally, for any news of a highly anticipated title and 1 do thank your magazine (and the others) are giving us exactly what we want. However, when he puts the fault for the trend toward prereviews on us, I take great offense. We are not in any way forcing the magnzines to say anything abont an upcoming title other than to simply show us a few screenshots and give us some basic data on what features the game will have. It is the publication and all those who comment on "neat" or "cool" soon-to-be-released titles that drive this trend toward prereviews, I, for one, that I want or need someone to tell me how great a game is before it's in my hands. I read your previews with interest but I would never base my buying decision on an meaniplete product. I think most gamers feel the same. The bottom line is that we simply don't trust the previews when it comes to buying decisions precisely because of the trend he talks about wherein previewers essentially "review" the game before it's done. Anyone remember Outpost? CCW and most of the other magazines gave this game top marks in their previews and yet the finished product was a dog (to say the least). What it sounds like to me is that Mr. Cirulis is trying to shift blame from his (and his professions) mistakes to the readers, which is reprehensible,

My advice to both Mr. Cirulis and to the gaming publications in general is thus: Clean up your previews! Stop telling us how great a game is when



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even you don't know for sure! Stop jumping on the hype wagon (upon which the publishers are giving you such a comfortable seat) and samply report the facts! Save the opinion and commentary for the finished product!

it's good business to give your customers what they want, and I don't fault you for that What I do fault you for is pointing the finger at us when you began to show blas. when you should be looking in the narror and pointing there.

As for telling us what to buy, as long as you do it based on actual reviews of fintshed product, then fine. Please do not insult my intelligence and that of my fellow gamers by saying that we're forcing you to tell us what to buy before we even can buy it. That's indigulous.

Steve For

via the Internet

Our Editor-in-Clin f responds. Like any good columrust, Martin Circulis draws the issue with bold lines and arouses strong opinions. This column even hit a nerve with me when I edited it. How could the man who skewered CGW cover cutie BATTLECRUISER 3000 and excoriated the much-anticipated Outpost in his reviews of those games ever believe that we would allow sneak preview covcrage to taint review coverage? Didn't he notice our complete turnsround on PRIVATEME 2 or LEGENOS '98 FOOTHWL? Our editoral policy, as Martin knows, requires that reviewers play the same final code consumers have, and that they finish the game. How could be believe that this policy allows writers to shape their

Martin is correct in saving that the pressure to, as many readers have put it, "prereview" games is very real. In blind studies and online feedback, many readers have complained that our reviews are often too. late to be helpful. You want earlier recommendations and often look to those of our

reviews in the image of previews?

competitors (who are not bound by the same restraints of reviewing finished prodnots and playing the game all the way through) for early guidance.

I certainly agree with you, though, that merket pressure for early information should not be an excuse to rubber-stamp preview coverage. Many readers wrote similar letters to yours asking how any writer or publication with integrity could do so. The short answer is, they can't Which is why we reviewed HEAVY GEAR and Ut TIMA ONLINE the way we didand rated them at 2.5 and 1.5, respectively.

Here's hoping letters like yours help all of us in the business of covering games facus on careful, some coverage based on phyring working code. I would welcome such a counterrevolution



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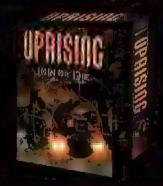
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READ IVE

Edited by Charlotte Panther (CPanther@zd.com)

Microsoft Plays to Win

With Several New Titles In the Works, Microsoft Looks Serious About Games

ter the success of Age of Empires and CART Precision
Racing, Microsoft is determined to show gamers that its winning titles aren't just flukes. I took a trip to see the folks at Microsoft recently

and found the company's games division hard at work on several titles that are scheduled to ship in the coming months.

Microsoft may be placing its heaviest bets on Urban Assault and Outwars. Both stir the action shooter pot with elements from other genres. Urban Assault (previously code named Anarchy) is similar to 3DO's Urbanic: It's an action game set in a war-torn future with intense combat and some strategy elements thrown in for variety. While the interface is currently being overhauled, the gameplay is sound, with plenty of pulse-

pounding, force-feedback action for the shooting junkle. The strategy (resource management and unit commands) adds an extra dimension to gameplay, but Microsoft promises that the game will be full of pyrotechnics and swarming enemies.

The second little, Outwars, begs comparison to Tomb RAIDER and MDK. It will try to distinguish itself with squad level gameplay, wherein you traverse

alien-infested warzones and bases with Afcontrolled squadmates by your side. Puzzle elements will ensure that your brain doesn't atrophy while playing, but for the most part, this game will try to throw lots of action at you. The squadmates element ms to be this game's best shot nagging an audience; each

seems to be this game's best shot at snagging an audience; each squadmate will have its own AI, and will behave realistically (shoot them in the back too many times and they'll go after you).

Both of these action titles will have full support for force-feedback joysticks and 3D acceleration.

LIRBAN ASSAULT is slated for an early summer release, while Outwars should be available this spring.

Microsoft also has two new strategy litles in the works. The Company is working with Ase of Empires developer Ensemble Studios, and although the company refused to offer details, we have a feeling that our empires will see a

MUG HUNT Dorwans is a squad-level exterminator game

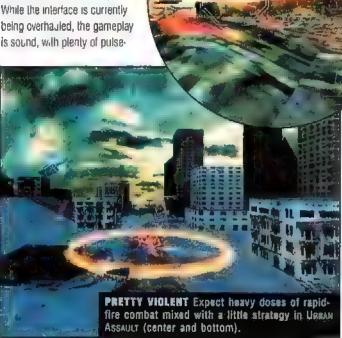
that's equal parts Tomm

Raiden, MDK, and Starship

few more ages. On a more immediate front, Ensemble has completed a patch for Age of EMPIRES that greatly enhances Al and unit pathfinding, and also blows away the unit I mit.

Racing fans won't be left out either—Microsoft assures us that another racing title is in the works, but no one at the company would reveal any further information at press time.

In my visit with Microsoft, I saw plenty of solid titles (and I sneaked peeks at several even cooler games in progress). This leads me to believe that Microsoft has finally gotten its gaming act together.—Elliott Chin





StarCraft Update

It's Been Delayed, But STARCRAFT Looks Worth the Wait



real-time strategy game turned into a consolation prize for the press and members of the public who were lucky enough to be invited. STARCRAFT Wasn't ready to ship for the party, but that didn't stop Blizzard from showing its real-time game at the Wizards of the Coast entertainment center in Seattle.

Although the single-player component wasn't on display, Blizzard did demonstrate StarCraft's multiplayer combation battle.net, with great results. Each alien race proved itself to be unique and full of surprises. While Blizzard had seemed optimistic about meeting its intended end of-year 1997

release date, some minor tweaks in unit path-linding and Al were apparently

needed Bizzard admitted as much when, shortly after the party, it announced that the release date had been pushed to the end of January 1998, Still, the game looks good, and we had to be

pried away from our computers at the end of

the night. Although StarCraft still needs a little polishing, Blizzard says it is taking the extra time to ensure that the game lives up to expectations. I wish more game companies would do the same.-Elliott Chin

Player Stats

Core gamers: \$63,307/year Casual gamers: \$61,000/year

How much do computer gamers earn? Casual gamers: \$16/month

Drayou

Core gamers: \$60.36/month



How much do computer users spend on games?

Source: The Strategy Group, 1997

>>> Eidos Interactive announced a deal with game developer and publisher, Square Co. Ltd., to acquire the exclusive North American and European rights to publish FINAL FANTASY VII -- The latest

installment of the best sei no role playing game franchisefor the PC. Released for the PlayStation last year, FFVII sold over 3.2 million units in Japan. making if the best-setting game on that platform. The PC version is scheduled for release this summer.



>>> Ian Storm recently announced that CEO Mike Wilson would be leaving the company to pursue a new interactive game publishing venture. Wilson will join several top-level developers to form a new profit-sharing game company. The new company will be known as g.o.d (Gathering of Davelopers), John Romero will assume the little of CEO of ton Storm.

>>> Fox Interactive has teamed up with Fox Sports to launch a new line of sports products, including Fox Sports HOCKEY, GOLF, TENNIS and Success under the brand name Fox Sports Interactive The games will be supported by a number of major partners and endorsements, including the National Hockey League and the National Hockey Players Association. British

game developer Gremlin has

also signed a long-term agree-

ment to develop products for the new division.

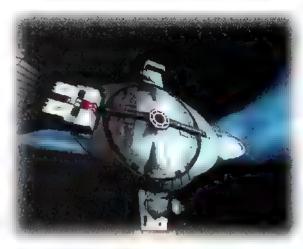
I-War Goes International

hile U.S. gamers have slim pickings on space sims that put you in anything bigger than a fighter (only Battlecruisea 3000 and Starfleet Academy come to mind), gamers in Europe have the fortune to be playing I-War. This sleeper space sim places you in command of a 150-meter corvette on the side of the Commonwealth, warring against the Independents, a faction of rebels that wants to establish its own government. The sim is being haired for its extremely realistic flight model which models mass, inertia, acceleration, and other physics concepts that are often glossed over in space sims

I Wan was developed by Particle Systems, and distributed throughout Europe by Infogrames. Although negotiations were still in progress at press time, indications suggest that Activision will pick up the little for the U.S. release. Stated for first quarter '98, the U.S. version will not ude some extra features, namely multiplayer capability and 3Dfx-acceleration (although the game already looks phenomenal in software). Gamers in Europe are raving about I-Wan's complexity of gamep ay realistic flight model, and awesome graphics—it looks as if Wins Commander: Prophecy may have

some competition on its hands.

The game will be released under a different name over here, as "I WAR" is already trademarked in the U.S. by Atan.—Thierry Nguyen



Near-Total Annihilation?

GT Interactive/MicroProse Merger Falls Flat

veryone on Wall Street seems to have an opinion about the "annu led marriage" of MicroProse and GT Interactive. But when we cut through a Lithe spin doctoring, CGW found that the merger broke off due to a fundamental difference, how each company writes off its research and development costs.

MicroProse uses the more typical approach for game publishers. For example, when Unimate Civil ships this summer, MicroProse will pay the developer and write off those fees that quarter—taking the revenue "hit" immediately. In a similar situation, GT, on the other hand, will amortize the developer fees over a longer period of time. The GT approach can put a better bottom line on paper in the short run, but if, say, more than a single product's sales are below expectations, the company could feasibly show huge losses down the line. This is not the first time such accounting differences have been divisive among game publishers. Forbes magazine once wrote that Sierra was playing "adventure games" with its books for writing off debts using the enter ainment industry method that GT uses. Sierra changed its accounting procedure several years ago.

In the end, the two companies could not come to a compromise between the two methods, and a split ensured fin the long term, the non-merger may end up benefiting MicroProse more than GT We'll know for sure once Facon 4.0 ships. — *Terry Coleman*

Short takes on games and hardware released just prior to press tim

WARRWIND II

With the couple bazelion realtime strategy games that have been released of late, many will be lost in the deluge. Let's hope WARWIND II won't be one

of them. While not exactly on the genre's cutting edge, WARWIND II has unique, enter taining gameplay that offers four separate cam paigns for over 46 different scenarios. Gamers will

have to carefully consider how to use limited troops, since the game doesn't allow you to just churn out units. In addit on to the first game's allens, two human factions have

joined the conflict along with new units and Indigenous animal life that you can tame to aid your cause.

Robert Coffey
Strategic Simulations, Inc,
(408) 737-6880.
www.warwind.com
PC CD-ROM



CHACI ISLAND

Something has survived all right, the need for Dreamworks to I cense anything

and everything to do with *Jurassic Park: The Lost World*, Chaos Island, though, is well worth the purchase for youngsters who need their latest dinosaur fix. The graphics are pretty good (especially the landscapes) but the main seiling point

Jane's Combat Gifts

he Origin Skunkworks team has three patches in the works for devoted Longbow fans. Owners of 3D cards not based on 3Dfx Voodoo chips will be happy to hear that the Longbow 2 team has created a Direct3D patch for the simulation. Because so many 3D cards don't support many of the features used by Longbow 2, however, the support will only be for certain high end cards. First to be supported will be the nVid a RIVA 128 chipset.

A 3Dfx patch is also in the works for Longsow Golo for Win 95. Although the graphics won't match the detail of Longsow 2, the patch should make for much faster frame rates, as well as improved visual effects from bilinear filtering, better shadows, and an improved sky.

Finally, hard-core LONGBOW 2 fans with want to download the Ultimate LONGBOW 2 CAMPAIGN CHALLENGE, a modified ver sion of the Azerbaijan campaign that replaces all the enemy tranian combat equipment with the latest Russian hardware. Jane's Combat Sims' Andy Hollis promises "if you can make it through this one, you are truly one of the elite."

All of these patches, as well as a new matchmaking service for online Longbow 2 play, can be found at www.

ianes.ea.com. —Denny Atkin



is the real-time engine coupled with the excitement of hatching Stegosaurus and directing characters from the movie. I have to admit, this game brought back the feeling of wielding my action figures over imaginary tandscapes, it's not as sophisticated as some mission-based real-time games, but it's great fun for those who loved the movie. —Tahsin Shamma Dreamworks Interactive,

Dreamworks Interactive, (800) 428-5331 www.dreamworksgames.com Win 95 CD-ROM

CONSTRUCTOR

Constructor treads on lamiliar territory, allowing gamers to build and manage a city from the ground up. The came offers an element of humorous complexity, however, by requiring the player to interact with the individuals who inhabit the game world. Players must keep tenants in line by maintaining their houses, dealing with their complaints, and sometimes even intimidating them into submission. Up to four Machiaveltians can compete through networked play, to see who can run the best city while ruthlessly sending hip pies, gangsters, and psychotics to harass their enemies. Be forewarned that the

required reading of the manual may not pay off in the gameplay.

-Mallhew Schaeler

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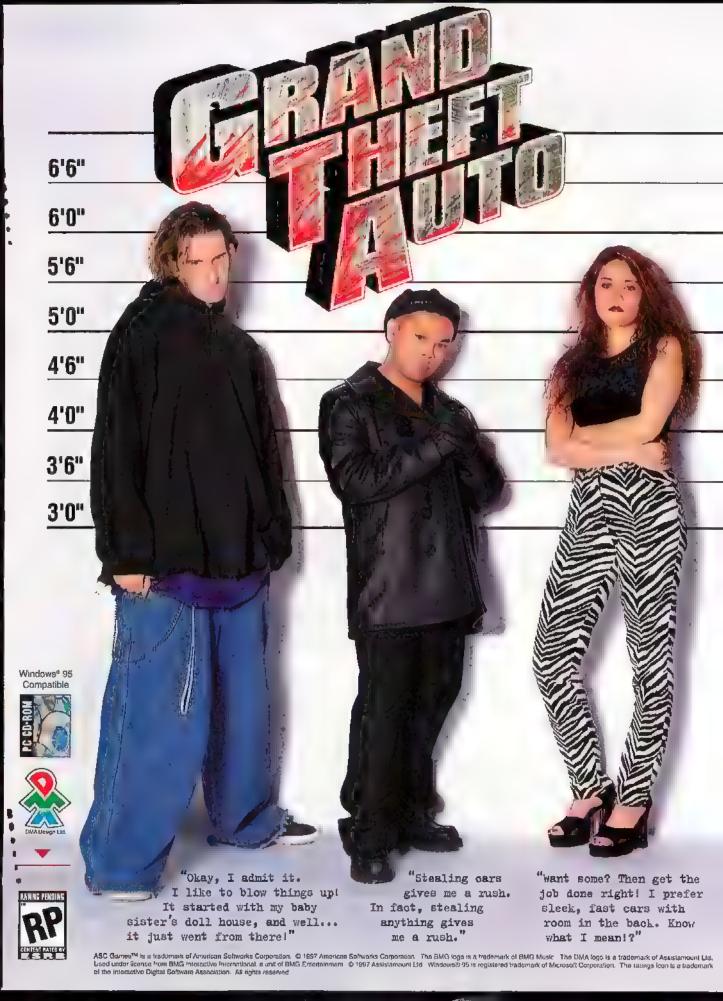




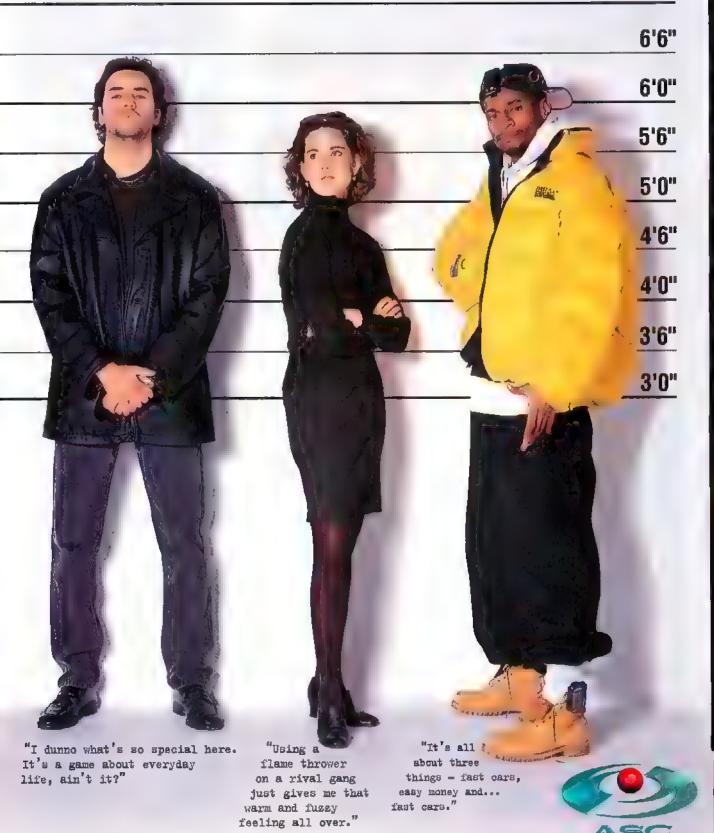
>>> Considering the huge for lowing The X-Files has established over the last couple of years, you'd expect ficensing kings Fox Interactive to be publishing X-Files products by the dozen. But, as of press time, there wasn't a single X Files CD-ROM on the market. It looks like that will change this summer when Fox releas es the X-Files adventure came. developed by **Ryberbole** Studios (Quantum GATE Vontex) in cooperation with Chris Carter The game's release is scheduled to coin cide willi the premiere of the X-Files movie. In the meantime, though, Fox does have a little teaser for those requiring a Sculiy and Mulder fix: X-FILES: UMRESTRICTED ACCESS. This multimedia productbasically a database for chroncally obsessed X-Filers-is stulled with full motion video, shols, sound bites and all the information you could ever want to know about the series. Using Microsoft Internet Explorer as a browser, it allows you to leaf through over 90 case lifes and 600 dossiers covering the first four seasons



of the show. And, as season five progresses, tans can connect to a special XFUA Web site to download weekly updates and add to their databasa. XFUA also includes a Desktop Dasigner with screensavers, wall paper, icons, sounds, and X Files trivia factoris. It should be on store shelves by the time you're reading this.



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Talonsoft Signs Hallof-Famer Gary Grigsby

But the Famed Designer Also Inks New SSI Deal

ary Grigsby is one of the lew game designers whose career spans the entire history of the industry. It's



been a real adjustment for someone who witnessed the advent of CGA graphics to adjust to Windows 95 and Internet gaming, but the success of his recent designs, such as the Steel Panthers series, shows that Grigsby still has a few surprises hidden away in the old hexgrid.

In fact, Grigsby is very much in demand. Just after TaionSoft announced that Grigsby had signed a deal for Battle of Bettain 1941 (scheduled for an August 1998 release)—a strategic-leve air game similar to Grigsby's venerable USAF on the Apple. CGW discovered that Grigsby has also been contracted to do Steel Partitiers IV for SSI (to be released in 1999).

Grisgby's co designer for both games will again be Keith Brois, with whom Gary has enjoyed suc-



cess since Steel Panthers (and who often doesn't get the respect that he deserves). That Grigsby and Brors are designing games for both TalonSoft and SSI is a sign that the competition between the two main wargame publishers is heating up. Of course, if these games are anywhere near the quality of CGWs 1995 Wargame of the Year Steel Panthers, or CGW Hall-of-Famer Kampfgruppe It's gamers who stand to benefit the most. —Terry Coleman

NI 1SOC SIN

Talonsoft.

EVOLUTION

When the booklet that comes with a game is both more enterlaining and more educational than the product if supports, there's a problem. And the Discovery Channel's new strategy litle, Evolution, sure has problems. Players must hudge their species up the evolutionary ladder white contending with rival species and a constantly changing (and frequently hostile) planet. It may sound good, but in practice it's a dull exercise in non-control and waiting, dominated by non events. A thor oughly unfriendly interface does an incredible job of standing directly between the gamer and what fille enjoyment there is to be had. Evolution is extinct upon arrival.

---Robert Calley

Discovery Channel Multimedia, (800) 780-6044 http://multimedia.discovery.com PC CD-ROM

STREETS OF SIM CITY

In this game, you drive around your own SixCity 2000 city in missions that require you to either eilm nate the opposition or perform other tasks. This style of game has not only been done before (Interstate '76), it's been done better. A few minutes of gamepiay and you'll realize that this game is neither as involving nor sophisticated as e'76—Tabsin Shamma

Maxis, (880) 336-2947 www.maxis.com Win 95 CD-ROM

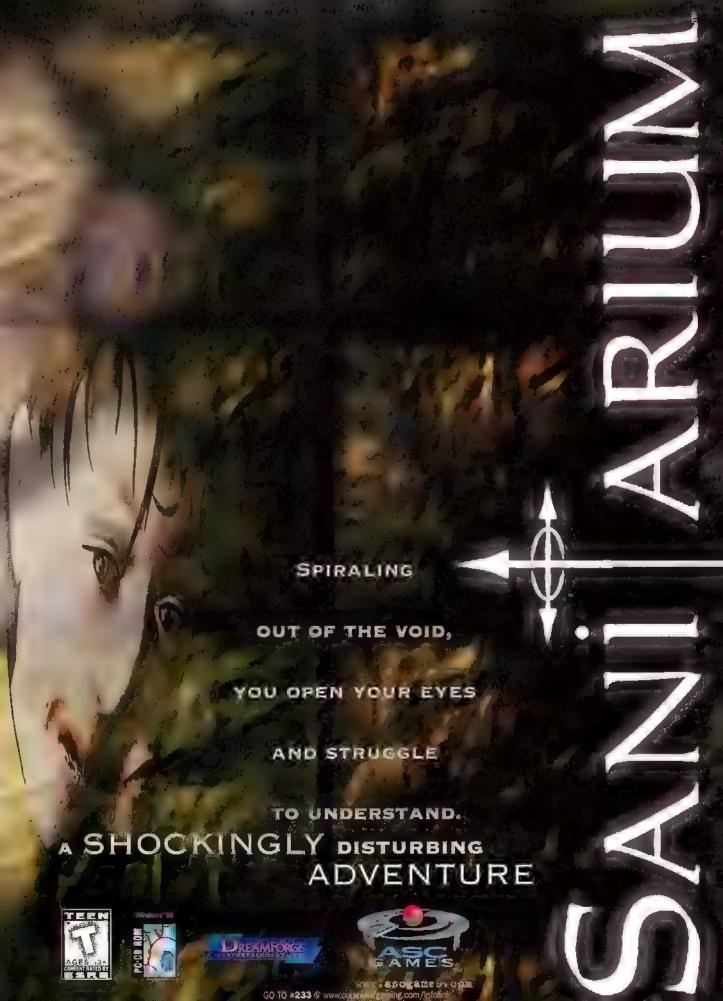
Aces: X-Fighters Sierra Air Warrior III Kesmai/i-Maj Baldur's Gale Interplay Alte a Artan II. Balkatana lon Slorm/Eldos Second Freespace Interplation (Carles of Second Parties of Second 5/96 4/08 repeat Air War MicroPres ipting 98 Finisher Wast 2 Ocean Freedom in the Balaxy Avalor Hill **IONS** Guardiana: Avaion Hill Guardiana: Ayents of Justice MicroProp minier 98 A/S lerdhell T Accoled IA-10 Warthoy interactive Magic Panzer 44 Interactive Mach Jane's F-10 Jane's EA id-1 York Ptaloon II MicroPro Mach Commanuer MicroProp Mile Atley Empire Michiel Markness Interpla Parzer Commander SS Quant For Blory V Siem Загіла 98 ecili) il Maximi odpuord Bellecole Return to Krender Sign erat of Yalasa Pary Interp aran 4/0B Sanitarium ASC Games/DraamFergi Sid Molor's Alpha Containt Franklis Sim City 3000 Maxis Soldiers at War S. TO A Locator Dig Time/Avaion (A) Miniat Sit Stratege Hasbro **98** Tac Bas '98 Avalon Hill 1698 nata Cir II MicroPros VA Baseball '99 interpli Saring 98 WarCreft Adventures Mizzard Warksmoor: Back Desen Ex











Gracking thecodes

501 Underhanded Ways to Cheat Your Way to Victory

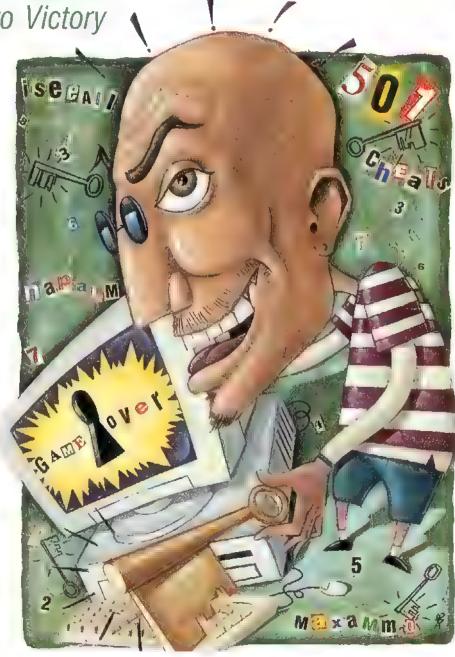
ou're under the gun and things don't look good. Fifty Shang villagers are beating on your poor Choson axemen in Age of Empires.

Overwhelming odds are making you reconsider your decision to embrace the Light Side of the Force in JEDI KNIGHT. You keep

Compiled by **Tahsin Shamma**

dying in Star Trek: Borg and you really, really want to move on to a more interesting game. What will you do? What will you do?

Cheat, that's what! Luckily for you, game programmers usually slip in a few magical codes that can give you the power to kill all your enemies in a single keypress, open doors, heal wounds, or even turn back time! The biggest problem with these wonderful cheats, however, is finding out what \$\text{they are. Well, have no fear, we've} taken the time to search out every cheat code known to man (or ogre), and they're all listed right here. After all, there's nothing wrong with cheating-just don't get caught...



ADVENTURE/RPG

Betrayal in Antara

Press Ctrl-Shill-Z to bring up a window, then type in these codes:

- some call me tim Kills all enemies
 supermarket for the rich Brings up
- inventory full of weapons, armor, vials

 3. why am i so dull Maximizes stats
- 4. gotta have magic Aren learns all spells
- 5. ask a glass of water Teleports party to beginning of chapter
- 6. man does my leg hurt Heals party

Monty Python and the Ouest for the Holy Grail

- Type uranus at the options screen just after you start a new game to travel anywhere immediately.
- Type tobstergirl at the screen just after you run away to get the hidden subgame.
- Type alicities in the Book of the Game to see all the video clips on the Gra# Vision page.

Star Trek: BORG

- Type in Ghey to skip to the next challenge point.
- Type in borg or hugh to skip to the parts where you are a Borg.

SPORTS.

FIFA 97

For these to work, you need to set your system date back to February 29, 1997. Select the Singapore team and type these while playing.

12. cantona Enables player to do a flying kick to a speciator

13. kayu Referee wears only underwear
14. kelong Gets players Abbas Saad and

ayers Addas Saad and Michael Vana

15. laochiao Gets players Quah Kim Song and Dollah Kassım

15. Ith Opponents forced to own goal

Formula 1

Save a game using these names, then start a quick race and abandon it. The effect should then work.



BETRAYAL IN ANTARA Instant healing, full stats, or access to all the spells in existence certainly can help speed your way through the game's quests.

17. speedy	Enables the bonus track
18. muzfrank	Changes in-game voices
19. ashcakes	Lava mode

NHL 97

Press Shift and type WAGD

to enable cheats

20. h	Home team scores a goal
21. v	Visiting teams scores a goal
22. p	Ends period
23. g	Ends game
24.0	Goes into overtime
25.1	Causes an injury
26.1	Causes a light
27. t	Shrinks players
28. Shift-t	Enlarges shrunken players
29.1	Two-minute penalty is called
30.2	Four-minute penalty is called
31.4	Five-minute penalty is called
32.5	Penalty shot

NHL 98

Type in these codes while playing.

33. mantis Gives players elongated arms, legs, and necks
34. nhikids Makes players kidsize
35. homegoal Gives home team a goal
36. awaygoal Gives away team a goal
37. penalty Causes a penalty
38. injury Causes an injury

39. zambe Puts the zamboni on the ice
40. victory Starts fireworks over the rink
41. flash Camera flashes from the stands
42. spots Turns on pregame spotlights
43. check Every player automatically body-checks an opposing player to the ice upon contact.
44. grab Similar to CHECK but with a stick hold instead of a check

45. eaeaa Gives you the EA Blades team



NHL 98 Opposing players cramping your style? Drop a Zamboni in their way



and you'll win every time.

ATI — it's all in the cards.



Industry's most recent awards from III
Industry's most recent awards from III
Magazine IIC World PG/Gomputing and
Boot, and ATI's partnership with the top
Inn OEMs ATI's accordance award winning

TENT products available in both Peline AGR Gerners of terrer some AFRICE Plays 3D features and performance PACUT and Aideo playband. Not to be mutdoned AFRICE Void delivers maximum levels of lessings wilder address to the AMATA. ATI

Wild setting the new standard in 20 and 30 more five and 30 more field with the late of RAGE PRO drivers (Declinate and all machine)

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3D Performance Comparison - ZD 3D Winbench98

AD APERTUPLAY	
Diamond Viper 330	
Diamond Monster 3D	438
Hercules Shingray 128	385
Matrox Mystique 220	375
90.8	
Matrox Millenium II	
Creative Labs Graphics Blaster	

with a myratered antiferential in the experience of the more and myration in the more in the same of t

Now You See It.



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Triple Play 97

To play in the alternate stadiums, go to the Stadium Select screen and press the arrow keys (r = right, l = left, u = up, d = down) in the following sequences:
46. r, l, u, l, d, r, l Mystery Stadium
47. u, d, r, u, d, l, u Cornlield
48. To hit a monster home run, hold down the 1, 2, and 7 number keys while swinging.

Triple Play 98

49. 1212-Girl Lets you play as the
Electronic Arts Dream Team
50. 1212-Girl 21 Gives you access to
three new stadiums: The Cornfield,
Ebbets Field, and the Polo Grounds
51. 1212-Shilt-Ctrl EA Dream Team
plays in their underwear

SIMULATION/SPACE

Advanced Tactical Fighters

52. At the main screen, press Alt-Shift-Ctrl on the right side of the keyboard. This will make every plane available to you.

Comanche 3

During flight press B, then type the following commands and hit Enter:

53. cat9 Existing damage disappears (only works with nonfatal attacks)

54. Ipig Weapon loading becomes faster 55. ratz Become invisible for 30 seconds

G. Nomie At the main series, bit Ctrl 51 This gives you a bax in which to enter cheats. 56. korny alk laar Maximum range 57. a'sarus Gives the training mission sargeant an Irish accenti 58. redtop tred Play any mission 59. rotted drap Press Ctri-1 for heavy damage 69. Brass clue Press Ctrl-z for full 61. had a mude on Press Ctrl-I for invincibility 2. Kal lines ins. onen a jelegor 63. ek no! less Japan Press Ctrl-> for Ion Strike

F/A-18 Korea

64. To take the tactical nuclear bombs along on any mission, first set each pylon to read **Empty**. Then click the right of the **Empty** row until a red X appears. Now you'll be able to mount two nukes on your wing pylons.

MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries

Hold down Cirl-Aft-Shift while typing these codes:

65. superfunkticalifragisexy invulnerability 65. iseenfireandiseenrain Toggles unlimited ammo

67. cookhhiilaaalilaaa Toggles heat-tracking

68. itsdahooomb Nukes targeted Mech

69. inmybeautifulballoon Instantly adds jumpjets to your Mech

70. redjackandtikrules Destroys targeted Mech

71. Ilkethecomstarbaby Successfully completes mission

72. ontimeeverytime Toggles time compression

73. crazysexycool Toggles Infinite jumpjets

74. beholdmyglory Free-eye mode 75. antijolt Toggles time expansion

76. Ilashyllashy Toggles autogrouping

Privateer 2: The Darkening

Use Alt-N to enter the navigations display during ship flight. Type f for find and then enter the following codes:

77. rep me up Repairs ship armor and shields to 100 percent

78. pety pety Refilled afterburner fuel 79. chill out Reduces laser

temperature to 0

80. napalm Get infinite nukes

81. no talent Invincibility

The cheat codes last until you land at a station or planet.

STRATEGY

Age of Empires

Type these into the chat dialogue:

82. diediedie All units die 83. resign You resign 44. reveal map Reveals the whole map 85. nepperoni pizza Gives 1000 food 66. cuinage Gives 1000 gold

87. woodslock Gives 1000 wood 88. quarry Gives 1000 stone



AGE OF EMPIRES What strange mounts hath the Shang unleased upon the Emperor's forces?



The Difference Is Real.

INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

DEATH-DEFYING JUMPS

AUJUST ENGINE THIM FOR SPEED

REALISTIC WATER PHYSICS CREATE WAKE LIFECIS

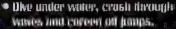
50 REAL ... YOU'LL WET YOURSELF.



POVERBOAT

Strap in and throtile up as you whip through the most realistic and immersive powerboat racing game ever made. Jump over roadways and through passing convoys or speed between oil tankers before they close off the track and torn your boat to splinters. Find a shortcut and take the lead, or better yet, secure your opponent into a river barge

ar 200 miles per hour.

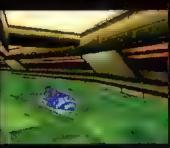


- Intly interactive 3D covirumments that continually change during races.
- Race computer apparents or compete
 with up to eight notworked players...
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- Can't find a worthy appearent? there your "ghost" using your own best time.

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Check out the Junnels but don't not too telendy with the walls.



See the sights to New York, not watch out for the const



Split your screen 4 ways and play 3 friends simultaneously.



Use first-person or third-person "fla-com" to catch all the actions











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89. no for Removes the Fog of

89. no fog Removes the Fog of War
90. hari kari Commit suicide
91. medusa Villagers become medusas
(when medusas die, they become
black riders; when black riders die,
they become heavy catapults)

92. photon man Gives you futuristic soldier
93. gaia Allows you to control animals
94. Ilying dutchman Changes your

juggernauts into flying dutchmen, allowing them to fly over land

95. steroids Gives all units and all upgrades 96. home run You win scenario

97. kill# Defeats the player at starting position #

98. blgdaddy Gives you a guy in a car with a rocket launcher

Birthright: The Gorgon's Alliance

During play, hit F3 and enter the following codes:

99. syncash Gives you 500 gold bars 100. synadv To play any adventure

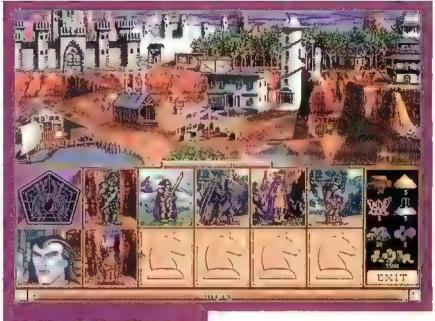


BLOOD AND MAGIC New creatures are a cheat away, but the computer gets one, too

Blood and Magic

Hold down Alt white typing these codes. Any creatures you create will be given to the computer as well.

the computer as well.	
101. fog?whatfog?	Shows entire map
102. boost	Maximum mana
103. elminsler	All research options
104. shadow	Wraith
105. body guard	Guardian
106. smag	Wyrm
107. yogl	Ranger
108. concrete	Stone galem
109. acolyte	Basal golem
110. father	Cleric



Reroes of Might & Magic II

Using the following codes will brand you a cheater after you win.

125. 011 Instantly Win climan scenario 126. 1313 Instantly lose current scenario 127. 32167 Gives the selected hero live black dragons

128. 1975360 Reyeals the entire may
120. To agoess the debug menu add
NWG to your Heads Incommand line.
The final program command should

read "Heroes2W.exe /NWC"

111. wolverine	Druid
112. fatal attraction	Fury
113. Ilying monkeys	Gargoyle
114, raise dead	Ghoul
115. alaska	Gnome
118. merv	Griffin
117. needs food badly	Warrior
118. merlin	Wizard
119, dead flesh	Zombie
120. microsquish	Juggernaut
These three work only on the	Harvest of

Horrors levels when you play as Redfang

Harpy

Goblin

Enchanter

Dungeon Keeper

the Reaper: 121, mother in law

122. gremlin

123. lareth

124. During gameplay, press the Enter key on the numeric keypad for a cheat menu.

Imperium Galactica

While in the game, hold down Shift and type karoly—this will activate the cheat codes.

130. c All colonies and inventions 131. v Gives you 100,000 credits

Master of Orion II: Battle at Antares

During play, hold down the Alt key while typing these codes:

132. canbonly1 Computer players unite against you

133. crunch Type at individual planet screen to finish current building project

134. einstein All technologies

135. iseeall Shows all planets and players
136. mento Finishes researching

current technology

137. moola Gives you 1000 BC



MASTER OF ORION II A little help from Einstein can put you at the top of the technology tree.



what is sin?

it's all in who wou sin

When the coo-of sintek industries begins injecting the streets of sceeport with a pna-affering drug, it's time to seassess the laws of morality

when this twisted bio-chemist plans to security protection overtake the world industry, and now generically engineered clexis sinclaire mutants, it's time to rewrite the olden rule où ace colonel who B Blade.

you've made a religion out of the with her army of you've going to make a y for her SINS





M.A.X.

138. maxammo 139. maxsurvey

140. maxsuv 141. maxsuper

Full load of ammo Reveals all resources Reveals all enemies

Allows chosen unit to be upgraded to level 30

142. maxstorage Fills raw material units' cargo completely

Myth: The Fallen Lords

143. Hold the spacebar down while selecting the "New Game" option to select any mission.

NetStarm

During play, type this into the chat dialogue:

144. .cheatorama 8675309 This will allow you to play any mission from the campaign and gives you a cheat menu for getting 10,000 Storm Power.

Settlers 2

Type THUNDER to enable these codes in gameplay:

145. Alt-F7 View the whole map 148. Alt-1 through Alt-7 Sets game speed

Total Aunibilation

These codes work only in multiplayer or skirmish modes. Access the message box and then enter the codes.

147. + atm 1,000 Metal and Energy 148. +contour# Shows 3D contour mesh #1-5 (use a number in the code instead of #)

149. + dither Dithering instead of line-of-sight



TOTAL ANNIHILATION A double shot of damage awaits the gamer who's willing to throw his honor aside and enter the world of slimy multiplayer cheaters.

150. + doubleshot Twice the damage of all weapons 151. + nowisee Full map and disables line-of-sight 152. + radar 100 percent radar coverage

War Wind

Hit Enter and type in the following cheats: 153. Igolden boy Gives money 154. Ithe great pumpkin Win campaign 155. Ithe sun also rises Shows everything 156. If am the bishop of battle Win mission 157. Ishow me the way Map coordinates 158. Jon a mission from nawd Workers build faster

159. Joh come all ve faithful Workers produce Fast-Inns faster

X-Com: Apocalypse

There are two cheat activators, one for the cityscape and one for the tactical screen. To access either of them, hold down All at the main interface and type ufo cheat for the cityscape and tac cheat for the tactical screen. You should get a confirmation that the cheat mode has been activated. In all cases, Alt-Esc cancels cheat mode.

Cityscape codes

160. Alt-numpad + Get one more of all equipment 161. Alt-a Autosave on/off 162. Alt-b Force base mission 163. Alt-c Force UFOs to crash 164. Alt-d Dimension map cheat on/off 165. Alt-f **Build base facilities** cheat on/off 166. Alt-g Test alien dimension 167. Alt-m Get \$100,000 168. Alt-n Show number of aliens in buildings 169. Alt-n Finish project instantly on/off 170. Alt-u Allow all manufacture on/off 171. AR-r Allow all research on/off 172. All-s Force overspawn 173. Alt-t Force apocalypse terror mission 174. Alt-v View ufopaedia on/off 175. Alt-x Get one of each vehicle

176. Alt-z

Tactical codes	
177. Alt-t	Training mode on/off
178. Alt-k	Kill all hostile units
179. Aft-w	Weightlessness on/of
180. Alt I	invincibility on/of
181. Alt h	Hidden terrain on/of
182. Alt v	Hidden units on/of

Show all people

tube connections



MYTH Can't get past a particularly tough mission? Then just cheal your way to the next one,

ACTION

Abe's Oddysee

From the main screen, hold down Shift and type in the following codes using the arrow keys (u = up, d = down, i = left, r = right):

183. utrirird View all movie scenes 184. driririu Select any level

Carmageddon

At the screen in which you select the map, vehicle, or start the race, type enable to enable the cheat mode—which will also give you access to all tracks and vehicles. During gameplay, press F4 to cycle through the modes until CHEAT MODE appears. Then the following cheats will become available:

208. F5 Total repair 209. FB Toggle invulnerability 210. F7 Adds 30 seconds to the timer 211. F8 Freeze/Unfreeze timer 212. F10 Increment lap counter 213. F11 Earn 5,000 credits instantly 214. F12 Switch between each opponent's camera and your own (external view only) 215. Shift-F8 Show opponents on map

216. Shift-F7 Adds 300 sec. to the timer217. Shift-F8 Toggle shadows between

none/your car only/all cars 218. Shift-F10 Increment checkpoint

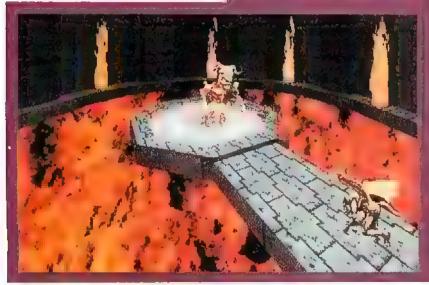
counter

219. Shift-F11 Lose 5,000 credits instantly

220. Ctrl-F8 Toggle shadows between

Toggle shadows between solid(faster)/translucent 221. Ctrl-Keypad 1 Toggle fly mode For the above code, use normal movement keys. Keypad 5 places you on the ground (still flying). Keypad 9 and Keypad 6 change the car's pitch.

Blood	
From C. than Sync.	
185. hunz	Wangan reday
A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	. no emin.
186. caplumyass	God mode
167. clarice	100 health
105. edmark	Hurt yourself
	lopa - elloping moos
100 stunky about	amping 1000
	hour to filly office
102. grisweid	Full armor
151 tanakan	Al Sections City
	unlimited ammo
	Cork i affigille mine
185. jeja	Drunk mode
196. kevorkian	Kili yourself
197. keymaster	All kays
198. krueger	Self-Immolation
199. mario	Level warp
200, amentan	THE PERMIT
201. mpkfa	God mode
202 hocesinmya	s babie godinoa
283. rate	Displays framerate
204. spork	200 health
205. sterni	Fades In from a
	black screen
206. tequila	Dual weapons
207. veorhees	Short god mode
1	

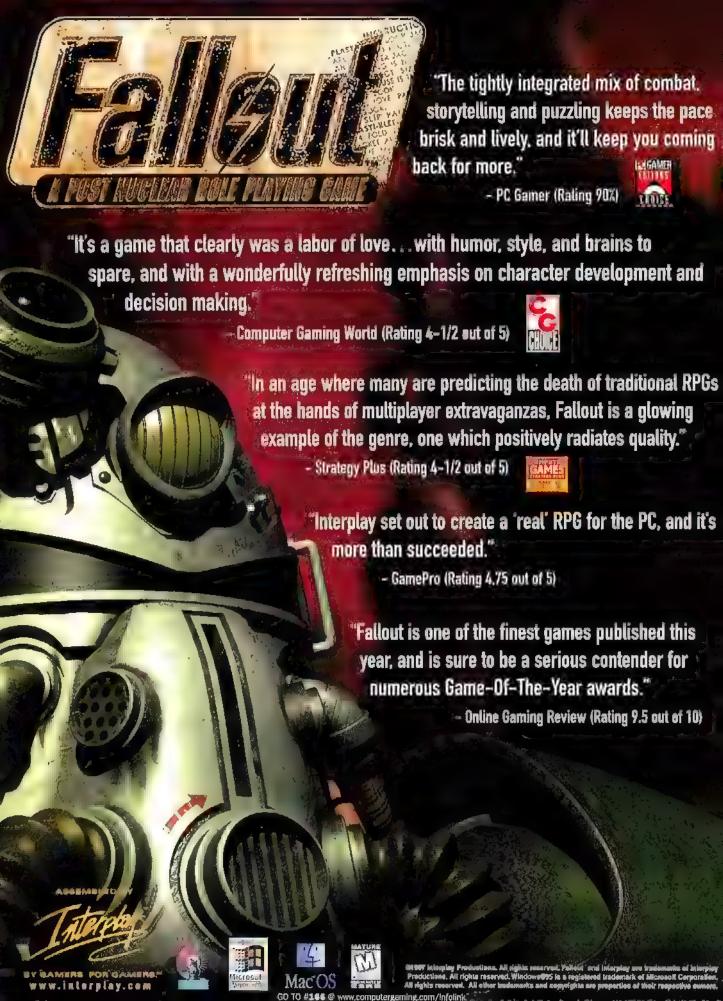


222. 0	Bonus
223. 1	Mega Bonus
224. 2	Pedestrians glued to ground
225. 3	Giant pedestrians
226. 4	Explosive pedestrians
227. 5	Hot rod
228. 6	Turbo pedestrians
229. 7	Invulnerability
230. 8	Free repairs
231. 9	Instant repairs
232, Shift-0	Timer frozen
233. Shift-1	Underwater ability
234. Shift-2	Time bonus
235. Shift-3	Body work trashed
236, Shift-4	Blow yourself up
237. Shift-5	Frozen opponents



CARMAGEDDON This game has more cheats than you can throw a bulldozer at.

238. Shift-6	Frozen cops
239. Shift-7	Turbo opponents
240. Shift-8	Turbo cops
241. Shift-9	Gravity goes strange
242. Alt-0	Pinball mode
243. Alt-1	Wall climber
244. Alt-2	Bouncey-Bouncey
245. Alt-3	Jelly suspension
246. Alt-4	Pedestrians shown on map
247. Alt-5	Pedestrian extro-bastard ray
248. Alt-6	Greased tires
249. Alt-7	ACME damage magnifier
250. Shift-Al	I-2 Instant handbrake
251. Shift-Al	t-4 Turbo
252. Shift-Al	t-5 Mega-Turbo
253. Shift-Al	t-6 Blind pedestrians
254. Shift-Al	t-7 Pedestrian respawn
255. Shift-At	t-8 5 free recovery vouchers
256. Shift-Al	t-9 Solid granite car
257. Ctrl-0	Rock springs
258. Cirl-1	Drugs
259. Ctrl-2	Grip-o-matic tires
260. Ctrl-3	Pedestrian harvest



Dark Forces: Jedi Knight

Press I to access the chat dialogue then type on to enable the cheats.

For the toggle cheats, 1 is on and 0 is off. 261. 5858lvr All map 262. baclame Full health 263. deeznuts Level skip 264. eriamih Fly mode 265. imavoda Light master 266. lediwannabe # Toggles God mode 267. All Force powers raccoonking 256, red5 All weapons 269, sithlard Dark Master 270. slawmo # Toggles slow motion 271. thereisnatry End level 272. wamoral All Items



JEDI KNIGHT in the Baron's Head level, you'll find a familiar crazed bunny named Max.

Destruction Derby 2

273. whiteflag #

yodajammies

Go to stock cars, championship mode, and enter your name as one of the following:

275. MACSIPOO Access to all tracks. stock cars, and wrecking racing 276. ToNyPark For full-motion-video 277. CREDITZ For animated credits

Extreme Assault

Type on dear at the main menu to enable these codes:

Full ammo
Upgrades current weapon
Full energy
Invulnerability
Completes mission
Deactivates enemies
Hellcopter mode
Tank mode

Nellhander

286. totłowr 100 percent energy 287. urdead# Gives you weapon # 288. тахтечр 100 percent hull 289. Impumpd Gives you all weapons 290. auntem# Warp to level # 291. Imstuck

Hexan II

Toggles Al

Gain Mana

Type in these codes at the game console (accessed by pressing ~): 292. god

Skips

current mission



Hyperblade

308. mdmksb Increases attack ability and makes you more immune to opponent attacks 309. potate Decreases character size 310. shuin Enables a hidden team 311. gorilla Gorilla characters 312. spicyhrains Upside-down characters

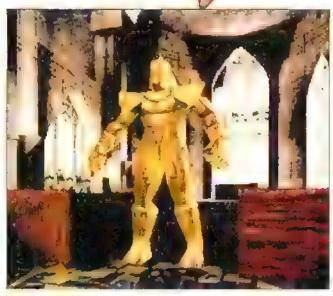
307. notarget Enemies don't recognize you

Changes your skill level

(where # is 0-3)

Interstate '76

313. This works only in TRIP missions. Hold down Ctrl and Shift while typing



HEXEN II What action game would be complete without a god mode for showing off in front of your friends?

God mode

getdown. How all the other cars will attack you. After you've been destroyed, you proceed to the next mission.

Magic Carpet 2

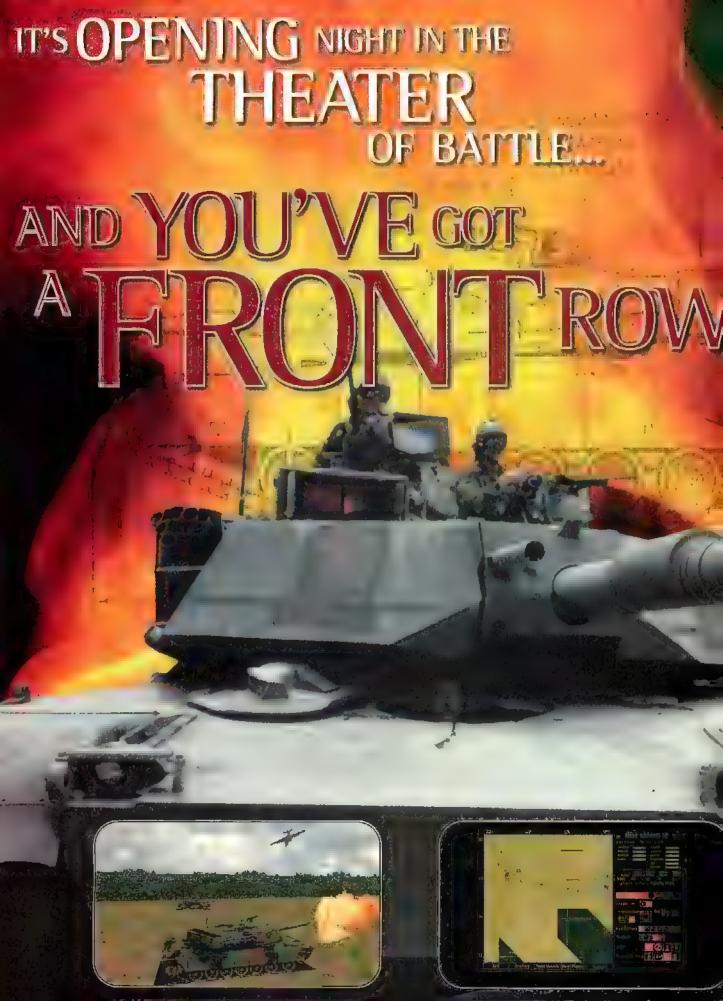
Press I then type Windy. Then enter the following codes.

314. All:11	All spells
315. Alt-F2	More mana
316. Alt-F3	Destroys all players
317. Alt-#4	Destroys all castles
318, Alt-F5	Destroys all balloons
319. Alt-F6	Heal
320. Alt-F7	Kill all creatures
321. Alt-F6	More experience points
322. All-F0	Free spell usage on/off
323. Alt-F10	Invulnerability on/off
324, Shitt-D	Complete current objective
325. Shift-C	Complete level

мик

Go to the help screen with F1. Then type in these codes. Use Enter or Esc to continue playing. Because of many different versions of MDK, not all of the codes may work.

326.	biggrenade	Homing striper grenade
327.	healme	Full health
328.	lliketolob	Mortar
329.	ineedabiggu	ın Gatt
330.	kill	Suicide
331.	makemefull	Health
332.	twistandsho	out Twist







Hit Enter-t during	gameplay	and	then	type
in the following	codes:			

131 F111	e innamund en	(RC3)
333.	excalibur	Get all weapons
334.	smałirocks	Unlimited ammo
335.	rabbit	Full shields
336.	lgotbetter	Full health
337.	gimmesomes	ugarbaby Full gear and
		weapons
33B.	wallswa	Refuel your gas tank
339.	knight	God mode
340.	cametot	End the level
341.	runaway	Fire all weapons at once
342.	shrubbery	Get powerups
343.	antioch	Kill all enemies
344.	unladenswal	low Unlimited luel

Need for Speed II

Type in these codes at any menu	SCF001
---------------------------------	--------

Type in these codes at any menu screen:					
345. armytruck	Army Truck				
346. hmw	BMW				
347. bus	Yellow school bus				
348. commanche	Commanche pickup truck				
349. drive29	Monolithic Studios bus				
350. drive30	Limousine				
351. drive31	Citroen 2CV				
352. drive36	Cart				
353. drive37	Outhouse				
354. drive38	T-Rex				
355. drive39	Wagon				
356. drive40	Souvenir stand 1				
357. drive41	Souvenir stand 2				
358. drive42	Souvenir stand 3				
359. drive43	Log				
360. drive44	Wooden crate				
361. drive45	Monorail				
362. drive46	Hover Police				
262 delug/7	HEA				



NEED FOR SPEED II When they said, "Drive a dinosaur," they didn't mean your '76 T-bird.

364. drive48	Sewage truck
365. drive49	Snowy wooden box
366. drive50	Snowy wooden box 2
367. hollywood	Bonus track
368. Jeepyj	Jeep YJ
369. landerulse	Toyota Landcruiser
370. mercedes	Mercedes
371. miata	Mazda Miata
372. pioneer	Makes all secret cars faster
373. quattro	Audi Quattro
374. redracer	Ford Indigo
375. semi	Big truck without trailer
376. slip Enable	es super slip 'n' slide mode
377. snowtruck	Snow truck
378. vanagon	VW Combi
379. volvo	Volvo station wagon
380. vwbug	VW Beetle
381. vwfb	VW Fastback
382. Hold down	n while the track is loading
to race at night	

Jallayss

383. qlairhead	Fly mode (use jump and
cr	rouch to move up and down)
384. olappear	Makes boss appear
365. olash	Unlimited ammo
386. olbounce	Superjump mode
367. alcds	Full map
368. olether	Invisibility
369. olips	Displays frame rate
390. olgps	Displays coordinates
391, algusher	Unlimited oil
392. olimyəllə	God mode
393. oljackpot	Adds inventory
384. olpostal	All weapons and full ammo
395. ofredlite	Freeze enemies
390. olscore	Skip level
397. olscreening	If Shows cut-scenes
398. olstinnet	Gatling gun
399. oltombsto	ne Suicide
480. olwimpy	Autoreioad
401. olyahoo	Bronze badge
402. ofzip	Teleport

Jump to level codes				
403. olhideou	1			
404. oltown				
405. oltrain				
406. olcanyon	l			
407. olmills				
488. olsimms				
409. olminer				
410. olcliff				

Perfect Weapon

Enter these on the password screen to warp to that particular moon:

412. DBDBBABA	ice
413. ADDCAADC	Garden
414. ACBABBCC	Forest
415. ADDDCACC	Desert
416. ODBOBBCA	Proteus

All weapons

Alien Worker

Omen Wasp

God mode

Enter this code during gameplay

for God mode: 417. gmgedm

Powerslave 418. lehocop

419. Johadeity

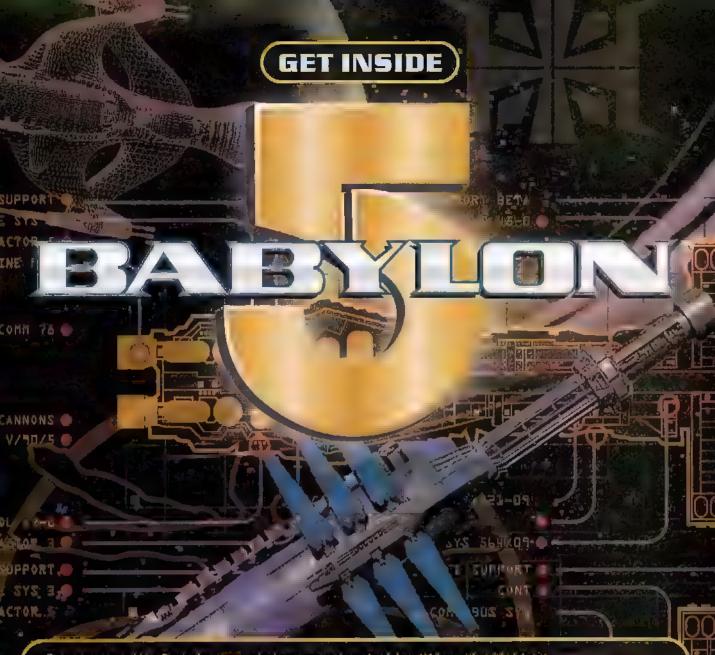
Atm. tongnosti	שטטווו טטט
420. lohoswa	All items
421. lobopick	All keys
422. lobosphe	re Entire map
423. lobolite	Removes flash from
	explosion and gunfire
424. lohoxy	Displays coordinates
425. holly G	lives a space at the top of the
screen	to enter the following codes:
426. level #	Jumps to level numbered #
427. doors	Opens all doors and
	activates all traps
428. creature	# Places any one of the
follow	ring creatures at your location
	(where # is 0-11)
429. 0	Anubis
430. 1	Spider
431. 2	Mummy
432. 3	Piranha
433. 4	Basset
434. 5	Magmantis
435. 6	Am-Nit
436. 7	Set
437. 8	Kilmatikhan
438. 8	Alien Worker

439, 10

440. 11

Red	neck f	lam	page		
441.	rdeivis			God	i mode
442.	rdall	Give	s all items	and full	health
443.	rdellp	Lets	s you walk	through	things
444.	rddebug	E	Toggi	es debug	, mode
445.	rdlucka	go#?	? Takes yo	ou to epi	sode #
				and i	map ??
446.	rdguns		Giv	res all w	eapons
447.	rdinven	tory	Gives all .	inventor	y items
448.	rditems			Gives a.	li items
449.	rdkeys			Gives	all keys

411. oiranch



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Michael Straczynski and

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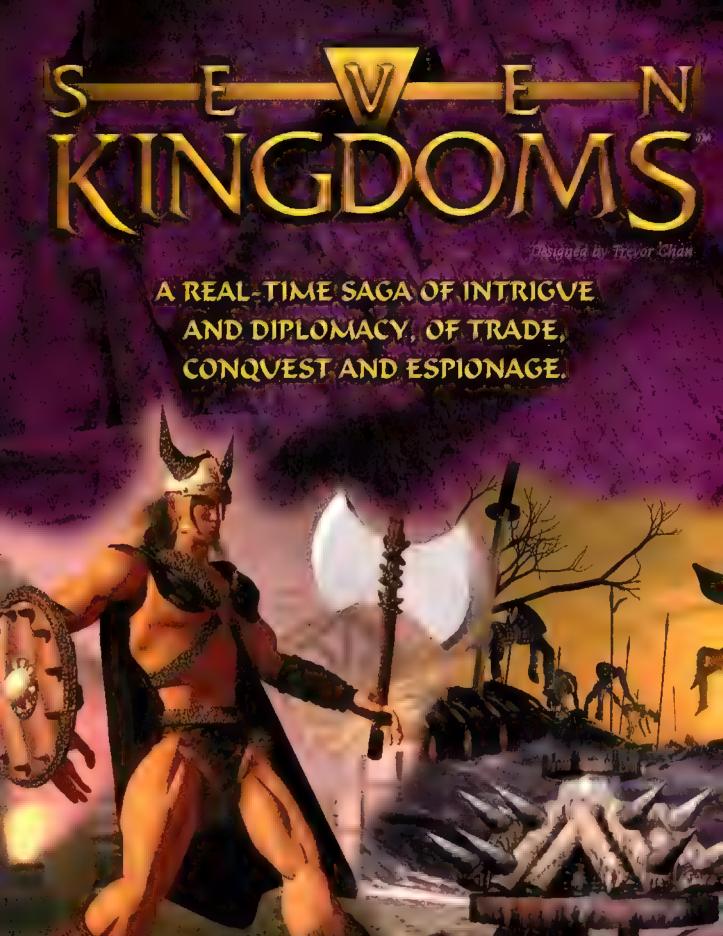
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450. rdmonsters Toggles monsters on & off
451. rdrate Shows your current framerate
452. showmap Shows the full map
453. rdskill# Changes your skill level to
level # (1-4)
454. rdunlock Toggles all the locks
455. rdview Chase plane view

Scorched Planet

456. latal Loads your ship with full weapons and ammo Invulnerability

Quake II

Press the tilde (~) key to bring down the console, then type these codes:

458. god God mode 459. notarget Enemies won't target you 460. noclin No clipping 461. give all All items and weapons 462, give shells Shotgun shells 463. nive bullets Bullets 464. give cells Cells 465, give grenades Grenades 466. give rockets Rockets 467. give slugs Slugs 468, give invulnerability Temporary invulnerability

Shadow Warrior

Press t to open the chat dialogue to type In these codes:

469, swchan God mode 470. swahost No clipping mode 471. swalmme All inventory items 472. swareed God mode, all items and ammo 473. swice Displays the frame rate 474. swman Full map on/off 475. swname Change name in multiplayer 476. swoult Quits the game 477. swres Changes the screen resolution 478. swstart Restarts a level 479. swtrek## Jumps to level number ## 480. swtrlx Bunny rocket mode 481. winnachinko Win at the Pachinko machines

SkyNET

To use the following cheats, press Alt-\ and then type in the code.

482. arnold Gives all weapons, but no ammo 483. slugs Gives you all the ammo
484. superuzl Gives you the superuzi
485. surgery Gives you full health
486. Illheback Warps to the next level
487. willnotstop Invulnerability
488. garble Turns on/off cheat code garble
489. target Gives you a targeting
box on enemies

Gives you an infrared targeting scope with zoom

HOTTEST CHEATS FOR HELLFIRE!

490. Icantsee

So we went the extra mile to get these super secret cheats for DIABLO'S Texpansion, HELLFIRE

Create a file called command.txt using the Windows notepad. In the file, use the following words to create the listed effect. Save the file to the filelifica circulary.

CANOTEST This enables the partially completed Bard character. The stats are there, but it looks the same as the Bogue this less slows you was been single-handed weapons, and the benefit will outsity become upperent than the fight two enemies side by side

THEOQUEST A little girl appears in the village. Complete her quest and get a ligasure.

COWQUEST Here's the big one! This code removes the humer and put in wacky cow. The cow gives you a quest but only if you're at a high enough

level. When you get the bovine armor, be sure to wear level was level was level when you lace Na-Krui.

by the time you read this, there should be a patch that fixes the bugs in Hellfire and gives you this additional code

BARDARIANTEST The Barbarian characteriolasais Notificage ability, but her interestates and can wield two-handed weapons in one hand!

Moto Hacer

Enter these at the name input screen and press Enter.

491. cdnalsi Gives access to all tracks
492. cesrever To race all tracks
in reverse mode
493. ctekcop To race all tracks
on "pocket" bikes

Tomb Raider

Hold down the Shift key and take one step forward, then one step backward. Release Shift and turn 360 degrees to your right three times. Then...

494. Jump backward Get all the weapons 495. Jump ferward Beat the current level and go to the next one

Yamia Raider H

496. Repeat the steps for Toma RAIDER except this time, have a flare in your hand.

WipeOut XL

497. rush Silly ships
498. xclass Phantom class
499. xteam Piranha team
500. xtrack All tracks



WIPEOUT XL A keyboard code will get you easy access to all the tracks in the game.

Super Special Cheat Code for WarCraft 2

Enter this code on the main menu screen 501, game over man

This gives you the full version of STARCRAFT, which was really ready for release when WARCRAFT 2 came out (Blizzard was just building up the anticipation, and the design team for STARCRAFT has been in Hawaii the past two years). §

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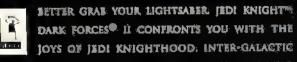
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he announcement is punctuated with applause, cheers, and delighted screams. A spotlight swoops past preassigned seats to crown its target with a luminous corona. Music swells into a symphonic cliché that would make even Barry Manilow proud. The winner walks briskly to the podium with visions of thanking God, Mom, and investment bankers dancing in his or her head. That's how most people think of awards ceremonies, and frankly, it's a lot of hooey.

Awards legitimate singular artistic efforts. At their best, they encourage one to try an overlooked product. At their worst, they heap extra hype on commercially successful products. As humans, though, we like awards and await our chance for recognition. We can't resist arguing the worthiness of other people's choices.

Each year, the editors of Computer Gaming World present the BEST game in each gaming genre along with the ONE game that transcends its genre and opens up new worlds and experiences to gamers of other styles. This year, we're also presenting the WORST gaming experiences from 1997. And the best part is, you don't have to sit through long dance numbers and ill-prepared acceptance speeches to find out who won! And the winners are...



GAME OF THE YEAR

Jedi Knight

n a secret ballot vote, the CGW Editorial
Staff voted almost unanimously (except for
one Gettysbung fan) to give the 1998 Premier
Award for Game of the Year to LucasArts' Jebi
Kwicht, designed by Justin Chin. This award is

given to the game that transcends all genres, presents innovative design ideas, and offers a thoroughly rewarding gaming experience—requirements that JEDI KHIGHT wholeheartedly fulfills.

JEDI KNIGHT introduced a host of new design concepts into the first-person action genre, helping to elevate it above the other 3D shooters in the market. The two chief elements that set Jedi

KNIGHT apart are its integrated plot and its character development. It was the first action game to tightly integrate the story into the gameplay, with cut-scenes that flowed straight into in-game action and multiple-objective-based levels that fit into the story. These have

been other attempts to meld story and gameplay together in action games, but none ever approached Jen's level.

The character development in JEDF KNIGHT also vaulted it ahead of the pack and beyond just the sights of action gamers. How many of us have wanted the chance to learn the Force or join the Dark Side? You can do both in JEDF, and you can do so on an immersive level that actually makes you care about your character's choices. It's a releplaying convention that's done better here than in other role-playing games.

Besides the plot and character development, Jon offered a host of other features that cemented its place as 1997 Game of the Year. Take, for example, the amazing level design and clever puzzles, the hair-raising lightsaber duels with the Dark Jedi, the almost cinematic way in which the game set up those duels of good versus evil, and the immersion in

the Star Wars universe. The graphics were good, multiplayer was fun, and the music (of course) was first-rate.

While QUAKE II delivers a more visceral adrenaline rush, Jed KNIGHT offers a much richer single-player experience. As did Diable the year before, Jedi rose above the crowd in appealing to gamers across all genres. The Force was definitely with LucasArts when they made Jedi KNIGHT, DARK FORCES II.





D (2.3

ACTION GAME OF THE YEAR

Quake II

phase this year. There weren't as many quality titles to play, but what good games did exist were head-and-shoulders above last year's best. The action genre has never lacked for excellent multiplay, but solo action has suffered egregiously of late. This was the year to fix that nagging disability, and our nominees provided incredible solo experiences in addition to their great multiplay. Of these nominees, the award goes to Quake II. Why? Because this is an action award, and for pure adrenaline-pumping visceral, instantly gratifying action, Quake II is the hands-down winner. No game gave us the

rush that QUAKE II did. It even had a good singleplayer component, with unit-based levels, multilevel missions, and little extras (such as radio chatter) to deepen the Immersion.
INTERSTATE
'76 was
more stylish
and original,
but it suffered a lack

of good 3D support and an irritating save feature. If both of those problems had been addressed, you might be looking at a different awards ceremony. G-Police was the most beautiful of all these games, but its lack of multiplay hobbled its chances for an award. As for Jedi, we think it is a better overall game than Quake II, especially in its story-telling, drama, and immersion. That's why it, and not Quake II, is our Game of the Year. But when we asked ourselves which action game delivered the purest rush for hard-core action gamers, we came back to Quake II.



OTHER ACTION FINALISTS:

G-Police Psygnosis ---**Interstate '75** Activision: **Jedi Knight** LocasArts.

ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR

Curse of Monkey Island

t lurned out to be a surprisingly good year for adventure games. While everybody (including CGW) was busy bemoaning the sad state of the genre, by year's end, we had more nominces than we could have imagined

There is one adventure game, however that clearly stood out as an unqualified triumph:

LucasArts' The Curse of Monkey Island, the long-awaited third installment in the ongoing story of doofus pirate Guybrush Threepwood. Like all the great LucasArts adventures,

OTHER ADVENTURE FINALISTS:

The Last Express Red Orb-Twinsen's Odyssey Advisor Zork Grand Inquisitor Activision

THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND IS an animated, 2D comic romp that combines challenging, inventory-based puzzle solving with unabashedly goofy cartoon humor.

Simply everything is done right in this game: lush graphics, outstanding voice-acting, strong storyline clever puzzles, and, best of all, a script with more big laughs in it than just about anything at the movies these days. It is, easily, the most entertaining adventure in years, and is our hands-down winner.

Our other nominees are also quite good.

Westwood's BLACE RUNNER is a remarkable-looking, faithful adaptation of the classic sci-fi film. Red Orb's

THE LAST EXPRESS, the year's best mystery, is a stylish and intriguing period piece set on the eve of WWI. Activision's Twinsen's Obyssey is a charming 3D action/adventure hybrid. And Activision's Zork Grand Industor is a wonderful return to form, with the best humor this side of Monkey Island





Fallout

ell, this is an easy one. The Role-Playing Game of the Year is FALLOUT, Interplay's masterful postapocalyptic epic, which is so good that we didn't even bother to nominate any other games. And though it had no serious competition, it's safe to say that FALLOUT would have won this award no matter how many other nominees there were, because this is quite simply the best RPG to hit the PC in years.

Dubbed the "spiritual successor" (as opposed to sequel) to the seminal RPG Wasteland, Fallout places you 200 years in the future, where you must cope with a nightmarish post-holocaust world of radiation, piant scorpions, badass mutant zombles, and more,

There's a lot to praise-the stylish, kitschy art design; the challenging quests;

the intelligent dialogue-but what puts this game over is its deep commitment to character development, in which your decisions and actions senously affect the outcome of the game. FALLOUT is an obvious labor of love from a team that really knows RPGs, and their enthusiasm permeates every

Role-Playing GAME OF THE YEAR

aspect of the game, down to the load screens and awesome manual.

The other role-playing games released this year-Betrayal in Andara, Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny, Shadows Over Rivaeach had its moments, but each had huge problems as well, and certainly none came close

to the vision, Inspiration,

and artistic accomplishment of

FALLOUT.





Sports GAMES OF THE YEAR

Baseball Mogul

hile the real world was full of boxers biting ears and hoopsters choking coaches, the PC sports world was a much saner place to be in 1997. A number of great new games came out, but two really caught our eye. With no real way to compare



them, we are honoring them both as Sports Games of the Year. Baseball Mogul is about as humble as games get, but it was more original than any sports title this year, putting you in charge

of a ball club and challenging you to do what all owners want to do most; Make money. The focus was not on action, but on the strategy, intrique, and back-room politics that form much of the drama of professional sports. It isn't for everyone, but for armchair

Jinny Hoynes PITCHER freaks, it's the Baltimore Orioles year's sleeper hit.

coaches and fantasy

CART Racing

icrosoft continued to redeem its name with gamers with CART Precision Racing, a high-octane, surprisingly well-done racing simulation. With state-of-the-art

graphics, internet play, and incredibly deep options that scale the game from novice play through

hard-core realism, CART offers the spiffiest high-tech sports thrills of the year.

Our other nominees were also great, NHL 98 and NBA Live 98 were the latest and best entries in EA's awesome action-oriented franchises.

while Links LS 98 made the world's best golf simulation even better.





Salary, 9150,000

OTHER SPORTS FINALISTS: Links LS 98 Access Software

NHL 98 Flectronic Arts NBA Live 98 Electronic Arts:





RAME OF THE ASTR CONTRIBITION

Longbow 2

or the second year in a row, Origin's

Skunkworks team walks away with a Premier
Award for a game based on the AH-64D

Longbow. Lonesow 2, the sequel to last year's winner, maintains all the elements that made Lonesow special, including authentic flight models, realistic instrumentation, and widely adjustable skill levels that make the

game accessible to beginners and combat aviation fanatics alike.

Building on that solid foundation, the team added a dynamic battlefield that ensures you'll never repeat the same mission twice. There's more action on the ground and in the air, and the addition of two new heli-

copters to fly brings new tactics into play. The game looks great on most systems, and is absolutely dazzling on PCs with 3Dfx Voodoo graphics cards. On top of all that, cooperative and combative multiplayer modes let players share the duties of piloting the chopper and

OTHER SIM FINALISTS: F-22 ADF Digital Image Design Flight Unlimited 2 Looking Stass



handling its weapons. Authentic, exciting, immersive, and graphically dazzling, this is a sim that transcends its genre.

DID's F-22 Air Dominance Fighter, the follow-up to 1995 Premier Award-winner EF2000, featured dazzling graphics,

great flight modeling, and immersive missions, which made this game not only authentic, but fun as well. Had it not omitted a mission

editor, it might have edged out Longsow 2. FLIGHT UNLIMITED 2, the first aviation sim to truly capture the environment of real civilian flying, deserves a nod as well.



Space Sim

Wing Commander Prophecy

ace it: Only the most starry-eyed gamers could possibly consider this year a great one for space sirns. 10th Planet never shipped, and Starfleet Academy should have shipped a year earlier. The

Euro-hit I-Wax would surely be a contender, but it won't ship in the U.S. until late spring.

So it was left to Origin/EA to not just salvage a tired genre, but reinvent it in the process. Not only would Wing Commander Prophecy have won Best Space Sim in any recent year, it was also one of the few senious contenders to Jedi Knight as this year's overall Game of the Year. Prophecy sports tremendous graphics that look great rendered merely via software. With 3Dfx support,

you'll hardly believe your eyes, as the in-flight action looks better than the cut-scenes in most other games.

PROPHECY is more than mere eye-candy. The gameplay, featuring a new, creepy alien race, is easily the most engrossing since Wine II—the missions were designed before the movie, and it shows. Even the full-motion video segments actually enhance, rather than detract from, the flow of the game, because what you see is dependent on how well you perform in the mission: PROPHECY has multiple levels of victory or defeat, another departure from previous Ways COMMANDERS.

Yes, Prophecy pushes your hardware (nothing new for Wing Commander), but it's also as close to Babylon 5 as we're likely to get on a PC anytime soon. For the detractors upset about the removal of promised multiplayer options, well, we'll take a compelling story, good characters, and classic Wing Commander wrist-wracking action over the empty single-player experience of X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter any day.



IN 1983, A HACKER NEARLY DESTROYED THE WORLD WITH A TRS-80.



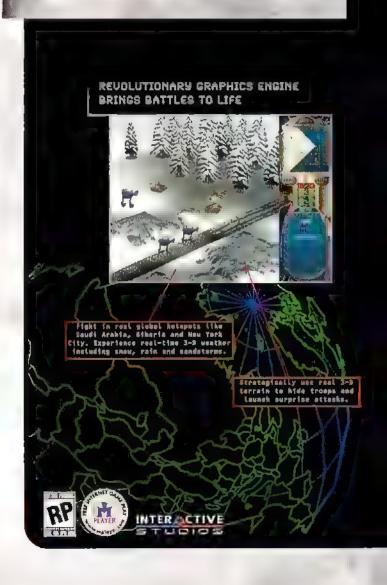
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SELECT YOUR ATTACK
UNITS FROM HEAVY
SLAYER TANKS TO
BATTLESHIPS AND
STEALTH BOMBERS





SITE YEAR

Myth

this was a good year for real-time games, even despite the number of ugly Command & Conquer clones that hit the shelves. The good real-time games of the year were more sophisticated, better-looking, and more fun. Yet, while all the other nominees were evolutionary steps in gameplay with the same C&C look, one game that stood out for its originality was Bungie's MYTH. Total Annihilation did 3D terrain well, but MYTH blew that out of the water with its undulating hills, exploding craters, and obtrusive tree tops—this was true 3D terrain that got in your face, Sure, Age of Empires added more depth to your real-time



building options, but Bungle went an entirely new route by including only tactical gameplay, there's no building, just fighting. And to make sure that the fighting was as sophisticated as possible, formations were added; when combined with terrain considerations, it made for a deeper tactical wargame than any other real-time strategy title. Warlords lift had a good role-playing, fantasy feel, but it couldn't beat

MYTH's originality or personality. Even Dungson Keeper lost in that respect (its dated look didn't help either)



But what sealed Myrn's award was its single-player experience. Bungle created the best single-player strategy game of the year. The carryover of heroes, the voice-overs and NPCs in actual scenario play, and the great back-story all combined to create an immersive single-player package that was the most compelling of all strategy games.

OTHER STRATEGY FINALISTS:

Age of Empires Ensemble/Microsoft
Total Annihilation Cavedog/GT Interactive
Wariords III SSG/Red Orb
Dungoon Koeper Builfrog

Wargame GAME OF THE YEAR

Sid Meier's Gettysburg

t was a year of sequels like no other—because the majority of sequels were surprisingly good. For the first time since the advent of the original Happoon, real-time wargames proved that they were here to stay, comprising exactly half of our finalists.

Actional Spitting, a real-time/turn-based hybrid, was simply the

best Battle of Britain game ever. A Bridge too Far improved in every way over Atomic's original Close Combat. Napoleon in Russia sent the

Battleground engine out in style, and Panzer General. It is a clinic in how to properly develop a sequel.

All of these fine games might have won the award in any other year. But 1997 marked the return to form of arguably the best designer ever. Six Meier's Gettysbuse might not be as

painstakingly accurate as TalonSoft's Battleground games, but it delivers a potent Civil War punch. Everything contributes to the period flavor, from the strains of martial music to the panoramic sweep of the formations as they move toward famous objectives such as Devil's Den. Not

only do you see the battle unfold as Lee or Meade might have, you even find yourself listening for trumpet calls to give a clue concerning enemy maneuvers. The tutorials are among the best you'll find in any genre, and the random maps and multiplayer options ensure that this is one game that really will play until Johnny comes marching home.

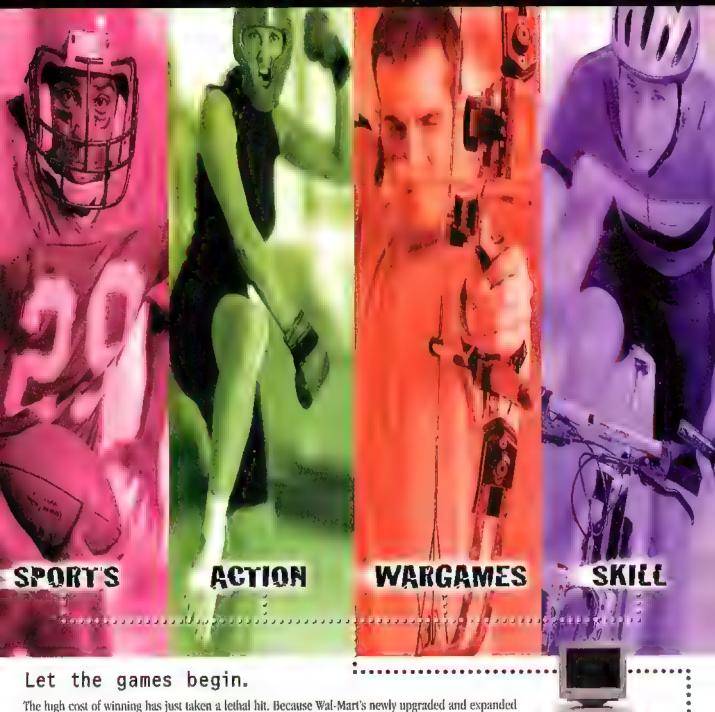


OTHER WARGAME FINALISTS: Achtengt Spinite Avalon Hill

Clase Combat 2: A Bridge Tee Far Microsoft

Napoleon in Russia TalonSoft Panzer General II SSI

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BUNGIE

THE FALLEN LORDS

PUZZIE GAME OF THE YEAR

Smart Games Challenge 2

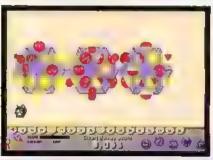
mart Games whetted our appetites with snackettes such as Word Puzzles and Struzlams, but nothing quite matched the original—until now. Instead of merely reinventing old puzzles or adapting classics to the electronic medium, Challenge 2 offers a few classics of its own. Our favorite is Polf, a delightful cross between golf and pool that requires you to hit balls into golfholes, using the most suitable pool-cue for the job. And then there's Say What, a musical jigsaw puzzle in which you must

reorder snippets of music to form a well-known arrangement. Aware that Berkeley Systems had comered the trivia market, but nonetheless wanting to honor fans' requests for a trivia collection, Smart Games also included Gates of Trivia, thousands of questions that we guarantee will have you running for your encyclopedia. Once again, Smart Games goes for substance rather than flash. But with brain-shattering puzzles like these, who needs fluff?

You Don't Know Jack Movies,
Berkeley's fourth Installment of its hilarious party game, came a close second,
this time aiming its caustic arrow at
movie institutions like LucasFilm and
20th Century Fox. Berkeley also ventured
into cyberspace with Acrophobia, an

online game in which you must invent the most apt definition for an acronym in a given category. And finally, Lose Your Maretes was the best Terms clone we've seen since last year's winner, Baku Baku.





OTHER PUZZLE FINALISTS; You Don't Know Jack Movies Berholey Systems Acrophobia Berkeley Systems Lucu Your Marbles SegaSoft

Haruware Product Of the Vear

Canopus Pure 30

66 This year's

award goes to a

3D graphics board

whose chip-set is

over a year old... ""

his year has seen its fair share of outstanding hardware. We saw the coming of age of 2D/3D graphics accelerators that now hit on all cylinders, not trading one for the other. There were also some impressive strides made on the audio front, both in and out of the box. Positional 3D-audio established a beach-

head, and is poised to make further inroads in 1998. Multimedia speakers have also improved markedly, with solid units available for \$100

Yet ironically, despite these

advances, this year's award goes to a 3D graphics board whose chipset is over a year old, and is the same chipset that gar-

nered two boards this same award last year. This year, it's Canopus' Pure 3D, based on 3Dfx's venerable 3Dfx chipset. Pure 3D distinguishes itself by providing 6MB of onboard memory, and a TV-out that actually looks good. It runs Direct3D, OpenGL, and Glide, covering gamers on all fronts. In addition,

Canopus brings it home for under \$200.

Other honorable mentions go to Cambridge SoundWorks' PC Works, a terrific satellite/woofer set of speakers with great sound for \$100. Diamond's Steatth II, based on Rendition's V2100 chip, made solid

2D/3D performance affordable, and its MonsterSound was also in the running for helping to get the 3D positional-audio party



started. The RIVA 128 chip from nVidia made big waves this year, appearing on myriad boards from a host of board-makers, including Diamond, ASUS, and STB.

OTHER HARDWARE FINALISTS:

PC Works Cambridge SoundWorks Stealth II Diamond MonsterSound Diamond

REVA 128 nVidia

Age of Empires

t was a very good year for multiplayer games. There was Jedi Knight, Interstate '76 Heroes II PRICE OF LOYALTY, SCOURGE OF ARMAGON, and QUAKE II. But one game in particular burrowed deep in our brainstems, luring us back again and again. Almost every day at six o'clock, work ceases at CGW, and Age of Empires begins.

Few people can resist Age's outstanding combination of graphics, sound, and gameplay. There is enough variety in the different civilizations, maps,

and victory conditions to ensure that no two mul-

tiplayer games are alike. But the heart of the game is its close-range melee combat, which is accessible and exciting for every kind of player. As a singleplayer game, AGE is interesting, but as a multiplayer game it's outstanding



Special Award Opischuling Muldigkny

Special Award: Artistic Achievement

hile most computer games this year looked to the future or distant past-or created a fantasy world of their own-for their inspiration, one game this year immersed us instead in one of the most alien settings imaginable: the 1970s.

The idea behind Interstate '76an "auto-combat simulation" set in an alternate universe 1970s-was good enough, but the extent to which the game's designers realized their vision elevated it into the realm of the ultra-cool. With stateof-the-art 3D graphics; a Mad Maxian script infused with bravado and style; and a silky, bass-heavy funk soundtrack, Interstate '76

shook the gaming world's collective booty. Yeah, the action rocked, but all of the chrome, including the hilarious opening credits and wonderfully cinematic cutscenes, put I-'76 over the top. And that's the way, uh-huh



r r - B F

Quake Mission Pack No. 1: Scourge of Armagon

his was a good year for expansion packs. We played some great games, and when we

were done, companies like Rogue, Cyberlore, and Ritual came in and gave us some more. Of all the expansions to all the games, though, one stands out in our minds: Ritual's QUAKE MISSION PACK 1: SCOURGE OF

ARMAGON. Simply put, this expansion, alone among all others, was actually



much better than its original game. The levels were better in Armagon than in Quake, and the DeathMatch level was arguably the best we have ever seen. There were many other stellar expansion packs this year. including Heroes II: THE PRICE OF LOYALTY, RED ALERT: AFTERMATH, and Civ II: FANTASTIC Worlds, but none succeeded in taking its original game to the next level quite as well as Ritual's Scounge of Armagon

OTHER ADD-ONS FINALISTS: Quake MP 2: Dissolution of Eternity

RequelActivision -

Heroes II: Price of Loyally **New World Computing**

Red Alert: Aftermath Westwood Civ II: Fantastic Worlds MicroProse

the meyelida<mark>n destruiki.</mark>

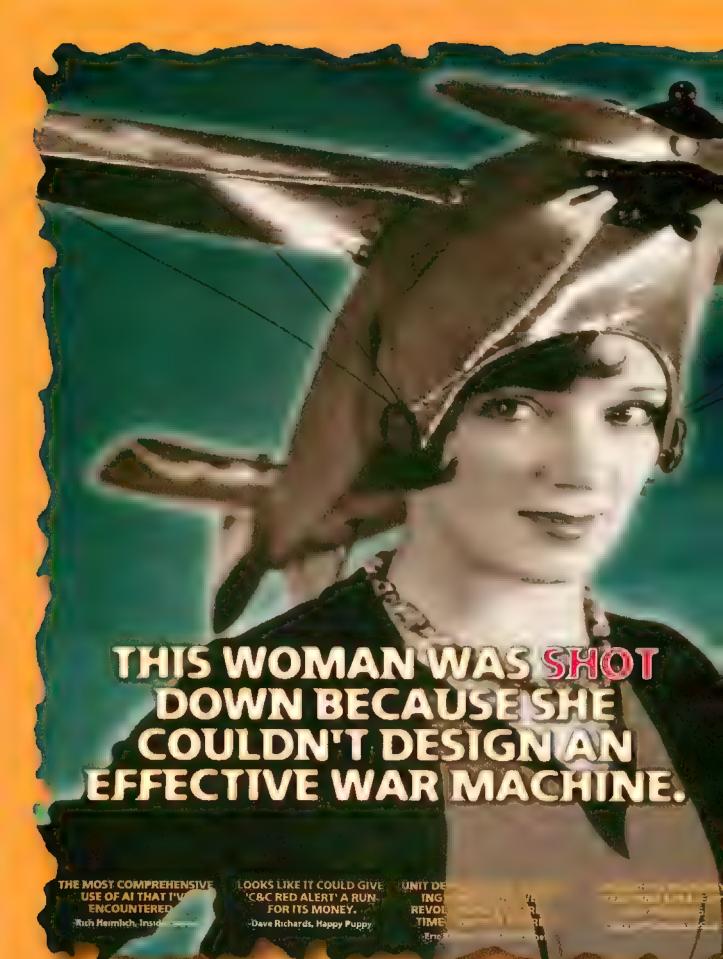
n Outlaws, Clint Bajakian has composed the most

Outlaws

atmospheric soundtrack possible. Paying homage to the musical scores from Clint Eastwood's archetypal spaghetti westerns-with their attendant whistles, guitar strums,

and vocal grunts-the evocative soundtrack seamlessly integrates themes for specific locales, game situations, and cinematic transition scenes to provide maximum aural satisfaction.





WILL IT HAPPEN

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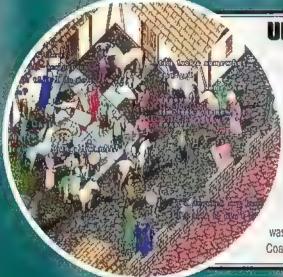
ZOOM IT. HEN ZOOM OUT (When too painful watch



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WORST OF THE YEAR

Games that promised us the world, but ended up giving us the willies



Ultima Online

COASTER Dr The Year

irst, let's acknowledge that there were plenty of lousier games in 1997 than Ultima Online Take Soldier Boyz—please But Ultima Online gets our booby prize for one reason: No game came into 1997 with greater hype, anticipation, and promise than this one, only to be so utlerly disappointing.

UO was cynically shoved onto the market, with a hefty price tag and a monthly connection fee, by publishers who were well aware that the game was not even remotely complete. Given the huge lag problems, bugs, and sneer unplayability, Origin owed it to gamers to first, acknowledge—publicly, immediately—that the game was a beta, and second, waive the monthly connection fees indefinitely until the game was playable.

We hope that ULT MA ONLINE will one day prove to be great. But in 1997 it was foisted prematurely upon the gaming public, and for that it is CGW's Coaster of the Year

ACTION Cuaster

MaseStayer (Raven): This top-down shooter was ill-conceived in design and an utter disaster in implementation.



PUZZLE Euaster

Clue (Hasbro Interactive):

The company should have bought a clue before releasing this unplayable clunker.



SIMISPACE SIM Coaster

G-Nome (7th Level): This game was a wonderful simulation—of what happens when you drop total morons into the cockpits of grant robots

SPURIS Coaster

NFL LEGENDS 98
(Accolade): So you got to play bad football in four different eras. Big deal. That made the game stink four times more than normal.

HARUWARE Coaster

Aptiva L31 (IBM): The only good thing about this problemprone system was the audio—It proved to be Ineptiva at nearly everything else. Hence, it is our Hardware Coaster of the Year

ADVENTURE/RPG

A FORK IN THE TALE (Any River):

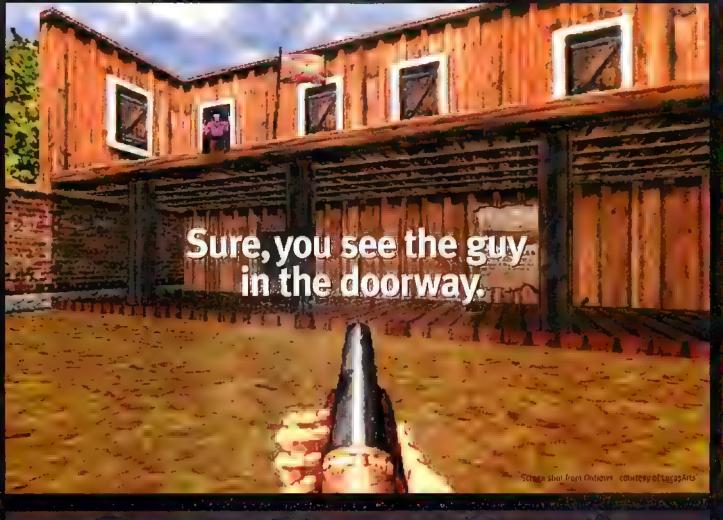
A game so forking bad it took down the company that made it FMV still sucks.



STRATEGY Coaster



Conquest Earth (Eidos): Hyped as a revolution in real-time play, this game's bizarre interface and disappointing gameplay made it revolutionarily bad



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puts you in the middle of all the action. Hook up speakers or even headphones and be prepared to experience an all-encompassing, heart-pounding 3D sound that will absolutely blow you away. Diamond's award-winning Monster Sound delivers explosive, hair-raising 3D gaming audio by utilizing the same A3D technology that NASA uses to create their virtual reality simulators. In fact, 23 separate audio streams combine to create the most realistic sound experience possible. Monster Sound accelerates Microsoft's DirectSound and DirectSound3D, the new audio standard built into Windows 95/98.

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HARDWARE

Microsoft Finally Embraces OpenGL

n an interesting twist to the skirmish between Direct3D and OpenGL, Microsoft and Silicon Graphics Inc. have combined efforts to bring OpenGL to all of Microsoft's Win 32 platforms (Windows 95, Memphis/Windows 98, and Windows NT

4 0 and 5 0)

Details of the deal are somewhat sketchy, with Microsoft taking on the task of certifying OpenGL instal able Client Drivers (ICDs) in their Windows Hardware Quality Lab (WHQL, pronounced "wee kul"). Microsoft has stated in the past that Direct3D was for consumer applications, while OpenGL was for professional

(CAD, workstation) applications. That mantra remains unchanged, and while Microsoft would like everyone to chant the mantra with them, it does mean that if game developers want to use OpenGL in lieu of D3D, there wik be enough hardware support out there to make the title run. And because having the OpenGL ICD will now be an integral part of getting Windows 95 certification, OpenGL should begin to proinfer ate much more rapidly than it has to this point.

White the ABM (Anyone But Microsoft) crowd may be smelling a conspiracy theory (ney. Microsoft is involved), the news for gamers is, by and large, good. Game developers will have an alternative to Direct3D, and because OpenGL is controlled by its Architecture Review Board

SiliconGraphien Microsoft Compant Systems

Fahrenheit

(ARB), which consists of eight members (Microsoft is one of them), there's less of a perception that Microsoft is trying to bully developers into using Direct3D. But wait, there's more...

Al press time, Microsoft and SGI made more waves with an announcement for a new set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) called Fahrenheil, which will incorporate aspects of both Direct3D and OpenGL. This new set of APIs, to be jointly developed by the two compa

nies, will eventually allow hardware vendors to create one set of drivers that will run Fahrenheit-specific applications, and also run DirectX 3.0. DirectX 5.0 through 7.0, and OpenGL titles.

The announcement comes as SGI is prepar ind to enter the Intel-based/Windows NT 3D

workstation fray, a departure from the company's traditional higher end market segment. For Microsoft, the deal seemingly kills two stones with one bird: First, the Direct3D/OpenGL belching contest becomes irrelevant (we hope), and the deal positions Microsoft to enter the workstation market with its Windows NT operating system. The lirst versions of l'ahrenneit aren't due until sometime in 1999, so it's still quite a ways out. But taking the optimistic

tack, this Microsoft/

SGI co laboration will be a win for gamers, as developers will have new avenues for creating killer content. As for the dimmer view, Fahrenhelt could turn out to be one serious piece of bloatware, since it has to translate both Direct3D legacy code and OpenGL code into its own format, it could introduce additional API overhead, and it might wind up being more of a hindrance than a help. Because the project's rolled-out products are so far off, we're left to speculate as to whether SGI and Microsoft can really pull this off. — Daye Salvator.

HARDWARE PIPELINE	- 1
Police Co. M. Company of the Co.	HEL
Deschutes (400MHz Pentium II)	Q1 '98
440BX chipset (supports 100 MHz system clock, 4 CPUs)	Q1 '98
Intel (740	Q1 '98
30fx Voodeo 2	Q1 '98
S3 VIRGE GX3	02 '98

ACRONYM O' THE MONTH HIPPI:

High Performance Parailel Interface



Real3D Enters the Fray

n the previous edition of 3D fron Works, Loyd Case gave you the first skinny on Intel's new i740 2D/3D graphics chip. This month, yet another vendor has announced a board using this new chip. But this

isn't "just another vendor," it's Real3D, Lockheed-Martin's real-time 3D graphics division—the architect of the i740's 3D graphics core.

Real3D is working on its Startighter board in two versions: an AGP version that will appear in off-the-shelf systems, and a PCI version that will be sold at retail. Of the two, the PCI part is actually more interesting, because of Real3D's implementation. Using a pro-

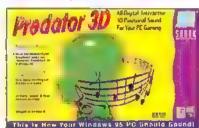


prietary AGP-PCI interface, Real3D "foots" the i740 into thinking it's on the AGP bus. It does this by creating a focal AGP bus on the board itself. The Starfighter is populated with a 4MB frame buffer, and texture memory ranges from 8MB to 16M8. To the i740, this local-texture memory looks like AGP memory, and can be accessed at AGP's 2x peak bandwidth of 528MB/sec. One concern I have is the fact that the i740's 2D core was developed by Chips & Technologies, which has done graphics chips for laptops, but doesn't have much of a track record in

the desktop PC space. Pricing is still being worked out, but we've heard guestimales of around \$249 for a board with a 4MB frame buffer and 8MB of texture memory. As soon as we get a Startighter in house, we'll put it through its paces and let you know how it fares. Stay tuned.

Turning to the audio front, Shark Mult media has just begun shipping its Predator 3D audio card, an ISA based card based on Analog Devices SoundMAX chipset, which supports Aureal Semiconductor's A3D 3D positional audio technology, and can accelerate up to six simultaneous audio streams. Analog Devices claims to have solved the problems associated with CPU overhead when transferring data to the ISA bus. The Predator 3D arrived right at press time, so we didn't have time to check this out, but in a brief demo running JEDI KNIGHT (which uses DirectSound 3D) and in some of Aureal's A3D demos, the board sounded pretty good. One downside: Predator

3D only supports DOS games in a DOS box, so you'll want to keep your trusty old SoundBlaster for renning in MS-DOS mode.
We'll bang on this one some more and tell you what we find. —Dave Salvator



LOYD CASE . UNDER THE HOOD

How Fast Is Fast?

The Black Art of Measuring Graphics Performance



ast month, I talked about how to improve the performance of your graphics setup. But what exactly does improved performance mean? This month, I'll take a look at benchmarking, both synthetic and real-world.

I'll also spend some time exploring 3D WinBench 98, Ziff-Davis' cool new Direct3D benchmarking tool. Finally, I'll try to address a burning question that seems to be the most common email query I get these days: Which graphics card should I get?"

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Benchmarking is a tricky job. Ideally, you want to capture the performance of a piece of hardware in a controlled situation, using a



method that's easy to quantify, it sounds simple, but it proves complicated in practice.

There are two types of benchmarks: synthetic benchmarks, which try to stress the system being tested in carefully controlled ways, and applications benchmarks, which try to measure how real-world applications behave on a system.

Examples of synthetic benchmarks include

PP Continued on pg 98

CGW

NN Continued from pg 97

WinBench 98 and 3D WinBench 98.

Examples of applications benchmarks include many of the games we use to test 3D performance, such as FLICITE SIMULATOR 98 and QUAKE.

At first glance, you might think that applications benchmarks are the only way to go—but what do you mean when you say application? It gets really tricky with 3D graphics. Take the PowerVR chip from NEC, for example. That chip doesn't do particularly well in 3D.

WinBench. It also fares poorly in some

across all the tests will probably get a high score. (I say "probably," because if it's egregiously hard to install or has other flaws, it may not get a high score.) When you're picking a card, though, you may have only one particular type of game in mind. A card that gets a score of 3 out of 5 may be better for your gaming needs because it may do one particular thing really well.

3D WINBENCH 98

This brings me to the latest version of 3D WinBeneli, the 98 version. First of

Benchmark Operation Web site,
www.zzbop.com. There's an online form
you can fill out to order the CD. (You'll
probably want to order the CD, since the
program is a nearly 40MB download.)
ZDBoP charges only a \$5 shipping and
handling fee, so it's well worth the money.

A STICKY QUESTION

The most common question I get via email these days is "Which graphics card should I get?" The second most common question is "Should I get a 2D/3D combination card or add a 3Dfx card?"





THE FINAL FRONTIER Note how the Stations scene now looks a lot better. Space stations belong in space, after all.

Direct3D games. In other D3D games, it's very solid, and in most games I've seen that directly use the hardware, it mus quite well and the image quality is good. I've seen other cards do quite well in some games and choke on others.

At CG Labs, we use both types of benchmarks and try to gauge performance across a range of different types of games. A card that does pretty well

C TECH TIPS

f you've got a RiVA 128 card, and you want to run Jebi Kingari with the best performance, set the texture size to 4 from the default of 1. You can change this in the Jebi Kingari setup screen, under displayment. There's a box in the lower right labeled "30 Accelerator Texture Size." Change this from 1 to 4.

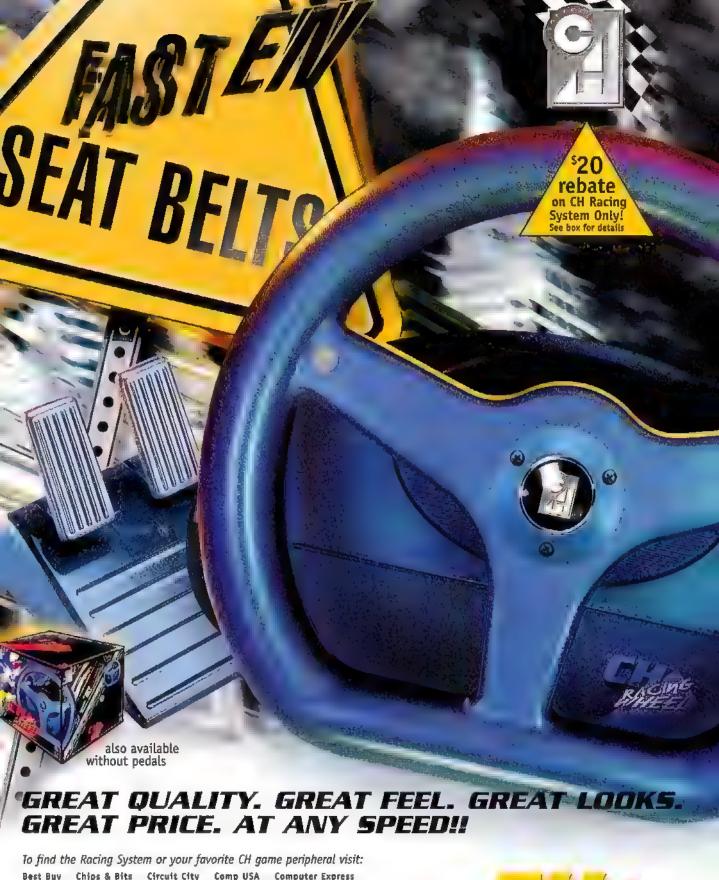
all, 3D WinBench 98 is much more comprehensive than the 97 version. For one thing, there are more than 40 quality tests (of which 25 are used during the actual 3D WinBench testing). No card currently on the market passes all 25 tests—In that sense, 3D WinBench 98 is forward-looking.

The benchmark looks better, too. First, the 3D WinBench WinMark scenes look more like scenes from a game, and the camera movement is more like game movement. Second, the image-quality tests are laid out in a more useful manner. The image-quality tests offer many more options (41 in all) for checking out rendering. Of course, this means that 3D WinBench 98 takes longer to run, but it's easier to use overall and can really drill down and help us understand how some eards implement—or fall to implement—key Direct3D features.

If you want to order a copy of 3D WinBench 98, go to the Ziff-Davis I'm always tempted to reply in a flip manner: "Read the reviews," But I understand that it's not a simple issue, especially when it comes down to your hardearned dollars. So my real answer is simple: It depends.

Okay, so that sounds like a flip answer as well — but it's not. It really depends on your situation, your budget, your gatting needs, and your nongaming computer needs. Let's walk through a couple of examples and show you what I mean.

First, consider a hard-core gamer on a budget. He's scraped and saved to put together a 166MHz or 200MHz. Pentium MMX system. The system has a graphics card, maybe even a mediocre 3D accelerator, but he wants to play GL QUAKE or just not have to worry about which 3D accelerated games he can play. The right answer, although not the cheapest, is a good 3Dfx eard. If our hard-core game player gets a 3Dfx card, such as the Monster3D or Pure3D, he's set. He can



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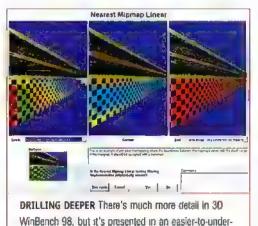
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a free matrox board check out www.matrox.com/mga/cgw-

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play GLHDE (3Dfx-specific) titles, OpenGL games (well, GL QUAKE,

anyway), and Direct3D titles

stand format.

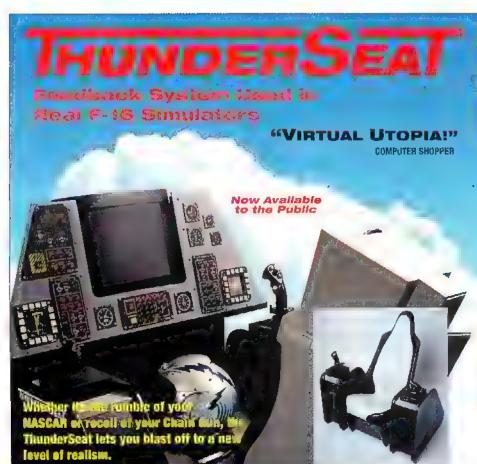
Now let's look at a more generalpurpose user. Here's someone who does a fair amount of graphics work, including some 3D modeling. While a 3Dfx card might be an interesting option for this user, perhaps he's slotImmited somehow A good card for him might be an ATI spert@work or even an AII-m-Wonder Pro.
Another option might be one of the many Permedia 2 cards out now, with as much memory as you can put on it

Then there's the typical home PC user Here,

spouses and probably kids are using the computer, too. He's not into tweaking the system, but he does want fast performance—or at least, doesn't want to worry about slow performance. A fast combo card, such as one of the RIVA I28 boards from Diamond, STB_ELSA, or others might be a good choice here.

Finally, there's the really hard-core gamer who isn't on a tight budget (You know, the typical member of CompuServe's FSCOMBAT flight simulator forum.) These folks aren't necessarily rich, but they can include their passions occasionally. The right answer here is both a fast 2D/3D-combo card and a 3Dfx add-on card.

The bottom line here is that there is no one magic-bullet solution to solve every graphics need for PC garaing. It's true that a 3Dfx board will see you through on many fronts, but it's not the least expensive way to go, it lacks 2D support, and there are other equally able Direct3D performers now available. For people wanting a one-board solution, there are a number of ways to go depending on what things you'd like to be able to do and what your budget is. So before making an investment, consider what kind of gaming you most want to do and what your budget is, and go from there. &



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Ed Dille, ELECTRONIC GAMES

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HARDWARE

Bring Your Games Into TV Land

by Loyd Case

let of the newer graphics eards are shipping with TV-out connectors these days, but many still lack this feature. TV-out is a handy feature that adds a little bit of extra cool to your setup

The TV Supersean 2 is an external scan converter, but unlike many similar devices, the Supersean 2 doesn't require software drivers. In fact, it has enough onboard memory to perform the framebuffer chores, so it handles the scan conversion folly within the box. You can connect both a TV and your computer monitor to the Superscan 2 if you want simultaneous display Think about this Now your gaming can be a spectator sport. There are also connectors for composite video-out and S-video.

The controls are simple and easy to use. One button brings up an on-screen menu that allows you to tweak the horizontal and vertical settings. This little black box is also smart enough to handle relatively high-resolution computer inputs - up to 1024x768 with oversean, and 800x600 with no oversean

Display quality through the composite output looks okay from a distance, but S-video can look quite good if you're not too close.

The possibilities go beyond just using a TV as a big monitor. Imagine that you're playing online, and you want evidence of your frag totals. Just book up the Supersean 2's composite output to your VCR-presto, instant gun camera

So the next time you eve that \$1,400,



21-inch montor, remember that 29-Inch "monitor" in the family room, After all, it's a waste to use such a big tube for mere television, 🔓

PAPPEAL: People wanting a big tube without the cost.

PROS: Easy setup; intuitive control set.

CONS: Expensive; you have to lug your com-

puter to the family room: ungainly wires.



Price: \$299 (street)

www.adstech.com

Vendor: ADS

Technologies (562) 926-1928

REVIEW • TURTLE BEACH DAYTONA PCI

Unsound Choice

by Loyd Case

his year is probably the last one in which the aging ISA bus will be a factor in PCs. One of the last bastions of ISA hardware has been sound eards. Windows 95 and DirectSound are beginning to change that, and we're finally starting to see PCI sound eards. The Turtle Beach Daytona PCI is one such example

The Turtle Beach eard uses the S3 Some Vibes PCI audio-ehip. The chip can handle the new DLS technology (downloadable sample store), which uses your system memory to store custom sounds that can be played back through the onboard wavetable synthesizer The card comes with a 2MB wavetable that's loaded into main memory During playback of several MIDI files with the Windows 95 System Monitor running, there is no significant CPU lat

The quality of the MIDI sounds is an entirely different issue, however. Even

with the maximum 2A1B setting, the MIDI sounds somewhat turny, and some of the percussion sounds are simply terrible. Digital audio sounds pretty good, but this is a noisy eard. Turn up your speakers when there's no sound being played back, and you could be standing near Niagam Falls.

Setup is pretty easy, but the card did not like the fifth PCI slot in my system (that's often the ease for bus-mastering PCI cards) Moving it to another slot fixed that problem. The setup program was confused about the system settings upon reboot, and offered an accurate walktbrough on how to fix the I/O addresses that had been set incorrectly.

Windows 95 game audio sounds pretty good (except for the biss), and DOS games that can be con from Windows 95 work quite well. However, neither DUKE NUKEM 3D nor DOS QUAKE ran properly from a Windows 95 DOS boot.



Although the low cost makes up somewhat for the deficiencies, it's hard to recommend this eard. For best compatibility, the AWE-64 value edition still wins, and it's much quieter to boot. As a PCI sound card, the 'furtle Beach card doesn't come close to the more versatile Diamond Monster Sound Give this one a pass. &

PAPPEAL: Loyal S3 users looking for a low-cost PCI sound card.

▶PROS: Uses one of those free PCI slots; fairly easy setup.

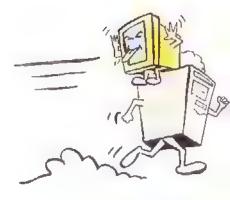
CONS: Lots of hiss; poor MIDI sound quality.



Price: \$99 (est mated Vendor: Turtle Beach 800-233-9377 www.tbeach.com

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The Invisible Game Card

by Loyd Case

've long lamented the fact that the creaky analog joystick port, developed in the era of the original IBM PC, is a CPU hog. Game ports on most systems today behave in a virtually identical manner to the one you could get for the original IBM PC. Most game ports - including those on ISAbased sound eards - can consume 10 to 15 percent of your CPU cycles because of the polling of the Joystick input. On top of that, during the actual polling interval, interrupts are disabled - at feast they are in Windows 95 - which further increases the latency of your net gaming experience.

Almost everyone has been looking forward to the day that USB controllers will arrive in force. While we were writing, Pacific Digital Peripherals has sneaked in with its Lightning 4 game card.

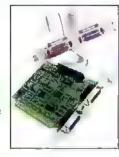
The Lightning 4 is a true game geck's delight. It can support up to four full-fea-

tured joysticks or eight 2-axis, 2-button joysticks. It even comes with an extra bracket, so you can have four joystick ports. I connected a CH F-16 Combat Stick, Pro Throttle, and Pro Pedals and successfully flew FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98 and LONGHOW 2.

More importantly, the Lightning has its own onboard processor to handle joystick polling, resulting in very low CPU utilization — less than 0.2 percent in most cases. The card comes with a DirectInput driver, the connector bracket, and a small demo utility that lets the device see eight joysticks in action (splitter cables are not provided) While the eard supports digital devices, such as Logitech's Wingman Extreme Digital, It doesn't support the SideWinder Force Feedback Pro, which requires the extra MIDI pin. If you're tising a standard stick, though, you should have no problems. If you're

installing it into an existing setup, make sure you disable any existing game ports. The Lightning grabs I/O address 201, and you can't change it.

So if you're looking to eke out that last bit of frame rate, take a look at your game card. Maybe it's time to add a little Lightning to your rig. §



PAPPEAL: Game players looking for the best game card available.

PROS: Low CPU utilization; easy installation; four joystick ports.

Doesn't work with Microsoft's

Fundhuck

stick



Price: \$119.95 Vendor: Pacific Digital Per pherals, Inc (805) 581-7023 www.pdpl.net

SEAGATE MEDALIST PRO 9140 • REVIEW ★★★★♥

Closing the Gap

by Loyd Case

CSI devotees (me included) have long maintained that one of the advantages of sticking with SCSI is that the higher performing technology drives are all SCSI, and that IDE drives are those lowly devices that run at a paltry 5,400RPM—or less.

Seagate just changed all that.

The Medabst Pro 9140 is a 9 tGB
UltraDMA/33 hard drive that spins at
7,200RPM and has an average access
time of less than 9 milliseconds. This is
in midrange SCSI territory, and the performance this drive delivers makes other
EIDE drives seem like pale mutators.
Using WinBench 98's Business Disk
WinMark, I got a result of 1,500, something I've previously seen only with fast
7,200RPM SCSI drives on my Pentium
11/233 test-bed. Disk drives being what
they are, that score won't be much different on slower systems. (We were care-

ful not to use the Intel bus-mastering

EIDE drivers, which can give spuriously high results).

This new incarnation of the Medalist uses most of the advanced technology you'd expect from modern hard draves, including MR heads (which helps increase the number of bits per inch on the dask - called areal density) and PRML read channels. One of the more interesting features that's unique to this drive is the use of fluid bearings. Highspeed hard drives can be quite noisy, but the Ruid bearings dampen the noise quite nicely. In addition, Seagate realizes that this drive will be bought and possibly installed by consumers, so they mount a plate (called Seashield) over the electronics to reduce the chance of damage to delicate components.

Are there faster SCSI drives? Yes Even some 7,200RPM SCSI drives have faster internal transfer rates, and, currently, nothing louches the 10,000RPM drives in terms of rotating storage performance. But after naming

the Medalist Pro for some time now, it's made my A List for hot products. The drive comes in a 9 IGB and a 6 4GB version. The 9 IGB drive should come in at around \$500, while the 6.4GB unit will likely have a street price of around \$350. Getting this level of performance at these prices is a steal.

PAPPEAL: Anyone looking for high-performance hard drives at a reasonable price.

PROS: It's a big, fast, quiet hard

COMS: Some systems need new BIOSes to support the 9.1GB size;

best performance with UltraDMA/ 33 controllers.



Price: 5500 Vendor: Seagate Technology 408-438-8111 www.seagate.com



Îİ JAISE C



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Micron systems powered the recent QuakeCon '97 competition. There, chief organizer Jim (H2H) Elson said: "Among the hard-core Quake fans on the Internet, it's long been established that Micron machines are peerless when It comes to performance and reliability,"

Cyberathlete Dan (RIX) Hammans took first place at that QuakeCon '97, where Micron systems ruled. If you're serious about gaming, face real competition like RIX at www.cyberathlete.com. And if you're serious about computers, dare to call Micron or visit our Web site today.





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Taking Control

by Denny Atkin

love the feel and amazing programmability of ThrustiVlaster's FLCS joystick and TQS throttle, but they're a real bear to program Normally, programming ThrustMaster's joysticks requires you to dive into a text-editing interface that only WordStar aficionados could love, not to mention that you have to deal with function macros and obscure acronyms for various button presses. But using CS COMMANDER 2, you can simply click on the button you want to program (on an on-screen picture of your joystick or throttle), then click on the keys you want that button to send (on an on-screen keyboard), It doesn't get much simpler than this.

Of course, the program also supports and simplifies more complex Thrust-Master programming. You can create macros for various functions, and then move them to a particular switch or button with a simple drag-and-drop operation. For instance, I created a macro that would activate ECM and dump bursts of both chaff and flares, and then mapped it to a single button-push.

If you're going to do more than assign simple keystrokes to buttons, you'll need to dive into CS COMMANDER 2's thorough, illustrated, online help file. The file Includes both reference material and tutorials. There's no paper manual, but this is a case in which online help makes more sense. However, it would have been nice to see more information on ThrustMaster's programming language, because although CS COMMANDER simplifies things, taking full advantage of your controllers requires familiarity with the language's rules. The only problem I encountered was a runtime crash when I didn't specify the path for the COMMAN-DER 2's config files during installation

The program supports the



ThrustMaster WCS, TQS, FLCS, FCS, and F-22 controllers. If you have any of these sitting on your desk but you've been stuck with using the canned program files included with your games, check out the CS COMMANDER 2. It could help you get the most out of your controllers' capabilities. §

PAPPEAL: Anyone looking for a friendiler ThrustMaster programming interface.

PPROS: Offers point-and-click programming of simple commands; simplifies even complex macros.

COMS: You'll still need to learn the details of the ThrustMaster com-

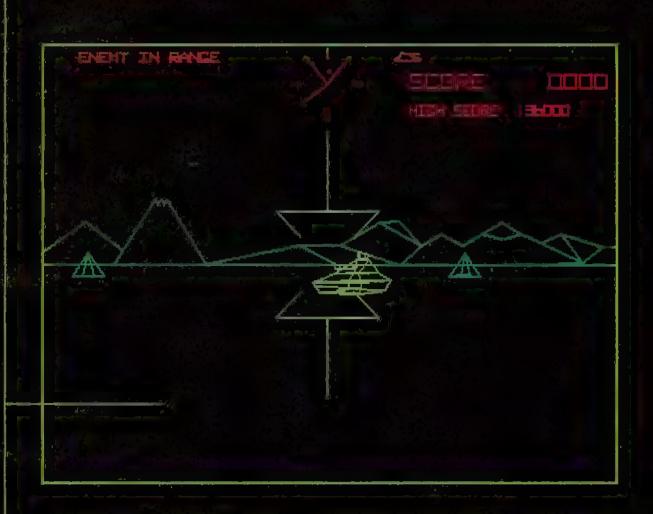
mand language to take full advantage of your controllers.





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Schar 05/05 HISTORY. 1 ROULON ME PILOT 2 Go To Nau 52/60 3 ATTACK PICK ME UP 5 GET REPAIR GET RELOAD HUNT RECYCLE SPRCE Go To BLT GO TO LAUNCH PAD SHIFT CANCEL

Actual Screenshot.

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then use your sniper rifle to take over enother unit. Switch vehicles right on the battlefield of one of seven distinct moons or planets!

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REVIEWS

CG Choice Games This Month



We review only finished products, not prerelease versions. The ratings are as follows:



Outstanding:

The rare game that gets it all right. The graphics, sound, and gameplay come

together to form a Transcendent Gaming Experience, Our strongest buying recommendation.

Very Good:

A high-quality game that succeeds in many areas, it may have minor prob-

lems, but is still worth your money, especially if you're interested in the subject matter or genre,

Average:

A mixed bag, it can be a game that reaches for the slars, bu, falls short in sev-

eral ways. It can also be a game that does what It does well, but lacks flair or originality.

Weak:

A game with serious problems. Usually buggy, seriously lacking in play value, or

just a poorly conceived game design—you should think long and hard before buying it.

Abysmal:

The rare game that gets it all wrong. This is reserved for those products so.

buggy, lit-conceived, or valueless that you wonder why they were ever released in the first place.

OF MAGICE



destruction, brave heroes with magical powers must rise up tostop the reign of terror and defeat the forces of tyranny. In

Lords of Magic, the successor to the popular Lords of the Realm II, you enter a fantasy world where good and avil fight for primacy against a mystical backdrop of wisards,

hen the evil sorcerer Balkoth threatens the peaceful people of Urak with death and

warriors, spells and storms, giants, gnomes, and Barbarians,

Building on the dramatic features that made Lords of the Realm II a breakthrough in strategy garning, Lords of Magic combines turn-based exploration and resource management with realtime combat. Join forces with others (up to six players can compete on a LAN or over the Internet) or marshal

your forces to take on Balkoth and his Barbarian allies along You'll command up to Eighty creatures, including elvery yampires, skelesons, and gargoyles, as you defeat evil and save

the realm. Wielding the forces of megic through spelle and artifacts of power, you can take multiple paths to victory: more choices, more outcomes, and unlimited replayability.

> Lords of Magic features a true 3-D game map, with 16 bit 600 A Graphics and a powerful map editor that puts you in control of terrain height, topography and texture.

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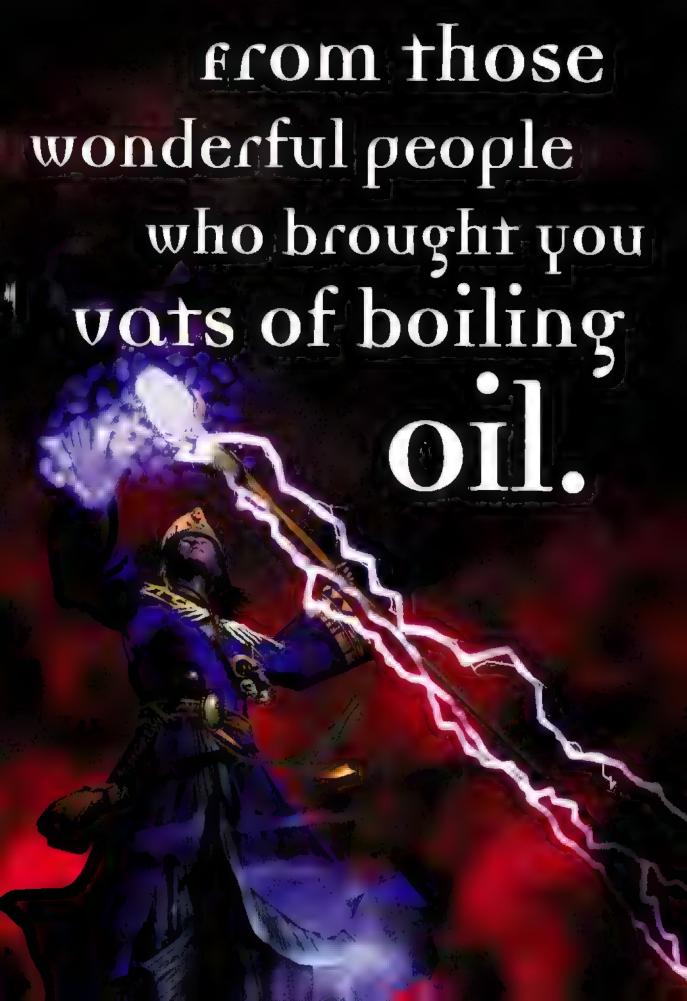


As you explore the land of walk you'll battle in dark and mysterious caves, castles and dungeons:

comes a mus







These Are the Games We Have Reviewed in the Last Three Months

Game Name	issue	Page	Publisher	Rating
Blood Omon: Legacy of Kain	December '	206	Activision	**/
Chasm: The Rift	February	153	GT Interactive	, ***
Deliance	February	160	Visceral Productions/Avaion Hill	***
Hexan II	January	216	Activision	******
Jedi Knight	December	298	LucasArts	****
Magaslayer	February	153	GT Interactive	大力 大力
Nuclear Strike	February	159	Electronic Arts	***
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	February:	146	GT Interactive	***
Postal	February	150	Ripcord Games	大大リ
Pro Pinball: Timeshock!	January	241	Empire Interactive	大大大大大
Resident Evil	January	246	Virgin Interactive	大大メ
Shadow Warrior	January	230	GT Interactive	大大士
Shadows of the Empire	Јапиагу	227	LucasArts	****
Shipwreckersi	February	159	Psygnosis	***1
Take No Prisoners	January	233	Red Orb Entertainment	**
Terracide	Dagember	316	Eldos	
Time Warrlors	December	325	Malo(ilm	***
Uprising	February	a dede		
Virtua Flighter 2	January	156	Soga Entertainment	****
vistua rigiitar 2 X-Car	December	338	Soga Entertainment Bethesda Softworks	****
A*Gal	Cacattoac	340	pringra soutworks	***
Byzantina	Cohman	176	Indoor to-	alle alle alle al
	February		Interplay	****
Dark Earth	February	172	MicroProse	***
Dragon Lore I(December	328	Cryo	***
Fallout	January	250	Interplay	******
Meridian 59 Revolation	February	165	300	****
Riven	January	254	Red Orb Entertainment	· ****
Ultima Online	February	162	Electronic Arts	大き
Boggle	February	230	Hasbro Interactive	大大大ジ
Dalapagos: Mendel's Escape	Fedruary	228	Electronic Arts	****
lose Your Marbles	December	391	SegrSp(I	****
Smart Games Puzzle Challenge 2	January	314	RandomSolt	****
Armored Flat 2	February	204	NovaLogic	**
Fighters Anthology	December	384	Jane's Combat Sims	****
Flight Simulator 98	December	374	Microsoft	****
Forced Alliance	February	209	Ripcord Games	***
F-18	January	256	Interactive Magic	**1
Sabre Ace		200		***
	February		Virgin Interactive	
Star Fleet Academy	Dacember	368	Interplay	***
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ABC's Monday Night Football 98	December	346	ABC Interactive	大大大大さ
Diamond Mind Baseball 7.0	December	342	Diamond Mind	***
NBA Action 98	February	195	Sega Entertamment	***
NBA Livo 98	February	194	EA Sports	大大大大リ
NFL Legends 98	December	362	Accolade	* y
NHL 98	February · ·	188	EA Sports	****
NKL Open Ice	February	187	GT Interactive	**
	February	182	Virgin Interactive	* ****
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I Wanna Kill!



Improved Single-Player Action and Dazzling Graphics Highlight QUAKE's Triumphant Return

by Dave Salvator

wanna kill. I wanna killi" shouted the iconic character in "Alice's Restaurant." If, in a similar vein, you have hornedal tendencies in your computer gaming experiences, we have one thing to say: "QUAKE II is your boy!"

After wowing action gamers with the world's first true 3D shooter, id Software

has rocket-jumped the "If it moves, shoot it!" genre to the next level in QII.

PLAYING WITH YOURSELF

One of the primary entiersms of QUAKE was that its single-player game-play was weak, a by-product of uninspiring level design and borderline braindead Al. This time around, the Al is more "special ed" than brain dead, a slight improvement, but not much The biggest improvements for solo slaggers

have come in overall level design, and mission based "units," in which you have actual objectives rather than just finding keys to open doors and exit the level. There's actually a story line in which you're pitted against the Strogg, an alien race helf-bent on the destruction of humanity. Okay, not the most original story line in the world, but fortunately, the missions from unit to unit have a certain continuity and flow. Also, as you battle your way toward the inner sanctum.

your missions include retneving a severed head for a retinal scan, knocking out a reactor, and disabling a communications system.

One thing any first-person game has to do is set a mood to draw you in and keep you wanting more. QH sets the mood early on, and I found that each night I played, by the time I reached a "practical stopping-point," it was 2:30 in the morning — again. QH's autho became much more immersive when I used headphones, and made the overall mood much creepier. QH definitely has the jones factor

There are several elements from DOOM evident in QII: There are small health units that you can still accumulate beyond 100 health points, as well as armor



TRANSMISSION TROUBLE One of your QII missions is to take out this communications station.

Price: S59
System Requirements:
Pentium 90 Windows 95
16MB RAM, 50MB hard
drive space, 4x CD-ROM
drive Sound Blaster-

39 Support: OpenGL, 30fx, PowerVR PowerVR Multiplayer Support: LAN and Internet TCP/IP (2-32 players), no CD required with 225MB install Designer: Id Software Publisher: Act vision Santa Monica, CA (800) 477-3650 www.idsoftware.com

compatible sound card





GET BENT, GET DEAD Like the monsters, you can crouch, too While handy for hiding, it'll leave you a sitting, or crouching duck in a firefight

shards (small amounts of armor to holster whatever armor you have). QII also features the new and improved BFG 10K, very handy for clearing entire rooms. Monsters are more of the cyborg variant --- part humanoid, part machine --- and have higher polygon counts than QUAKE's ne'er-do-wells, so their movements seem much more realistic. And when they do finally give up the ghost, some, like the guards, have a last dying gesture: They either flail around on the ground before expiring or they sit up to try to fire one last shot before passing on. So, you definitely have an incentive to reduce them to giblets.

Most of the same power-ups are back in QII, except for the Ring of Shadows (invisibility), which has been replaced by the Silencer, All power-ups, underwater breathers, and environmental suits can be stored in your inventory and used when needed. It's very handy indeed to have on-demand quad damage for those especially hairy moments.

Each unit through which you battle consists of three or four interconnected QUAKE-sized levels. One annoyance with the new larger "units" is that whenever you reach a connector between two levels, there's nothing to tell you which level you're about to enter. Having this might seem like something of a crutch, but given the longer load times between levels, it would have been a helpful addition

The Strogg combatants are a little smarter than their QUAKE ancestors, though they're still not an especially bright lot. In QII, some of the baddies can crouch to duck your shot, though they stay crouched long enough to become catchers of your lead fastball. Two words: Ann lower The monsters' Al routines are scripted, so they can't react dynamically to what you're doing, but there are some clever effects. For example, some preset events take place at certain Y-junctions: You might come in, go left, start partying with a couple of Stroggs, and suddenly realize that you're also taking fire from behind. The other pranksters were lurking on the other side of the Y-junction and have decided to join the fun. So, while individual AI isn't stellar, enemy placement and clustering can still keep you on your toes.

The three difficulty levels - easy, medium, and hard - scale up the number of fees and the number of hit points needed to down your enemies, while reducing the amount of health seattered throughout the units. QII doesn't have a Nightmare difficulty level, but the Hard setting should keep you sufficiently overwhelmed.

The final showdown is with the Strogg commander, one bigassed boss whose arsenal includes a BFC and twin chain guns. Ouch Without giving away too much, there's a very cool sequence during the Final Showdown that's reminiscent of Aliens. The final level also has a pretty cool secret that I'll leave you to discover.

THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

One thing that QUAKE did absolutely right was its multiplayer gameplay. QII, therefore, faces a huge challenge to outdo its predecessor in this arena. The news here is for the most part good, with a few weaknesses. First, the good stuff:

As in single-player action, you can opt to store power-ups or have them instantly activated. Among the Frags-R-Us crowd here at CGW, the opinions about power-up hoarding are mixed. Some like it, while others think it unfairly tilts gameplay. Rather than glowing, a player with the quad turns blue, whereas someone with invulnerability turns bright red. Definitely a case in which it's better to give than receive. Another cool addition is that you get a countdown when a power-up is activated so you know when it's about to run out of gas.

Curiously, co-op multiplayer is nowhere to be found in QII. It probably wasn't the preferred way to play QUAKE multiplayer, but it was fun. QII no longer supports LAN multiplayer using the IPX protocol; it now uses only TCP/IP. Thankfully, setting up TCP/IP has become much less painful in Windows 95.

Multiplayer gameplay feels similar to QUAKE's, though your

MARCH 1998

weapon is held to one side, so there's a bit of learning curve to alming in QII. You can set your weapon to be centered, but it won't be visible. The biggest downer in QII's multiplayer is that there aren't any levels included that are expressly multiplayer levels. All DeathMatch levels are actual single-player levels, and while some make for good DeathMatch levels, they're not quite up to the six





YOUR WINDOW ON THE WORLD In addition to lots of giblets, Qlf's graphics include spectacular scenery



Back In Tomb

A Bit Less Tomb-Raiding and Some Minor Polishing Makes for a Decent Seguel

by Thierry Nguyen



ho was it, I won der, that started the idea that archaeology is a sexy profession (Okay, I also wonder how Lara Croft can run around Tibet in short-shorts, but

that's a different topic.) In all the Indiana Jones movies and in TOMB RAIDER, archaeology tooks to be a career full of danger, intrigue, and many tombs. In reality, the job usually involves endless, monotonous diggang and sifting, but you can continue the fantasy ideal of archaeology via the latest installment of Gore Design's TOMB RAIDER series.

DEADLY DAGGER

In the original TOMR RAIDER you searched for the Scion that would unlock the secret of Atlants and its fate; TOMB RAIDER II has you going after the mystical Dagger of Xian. The game opens with a fancy-hooking FMV sequence demonstrating the power of the Dagger, as it turns its owner into a Dragon. You then see it buried beneath the Great Wall of China. That's your

setup. Unless you opt for training in Lands mansion, starting the game will whisk you off to the Great Wall where you then begin your journey through 18 game levels.

Don't think your quest ends here though

MORE GRAPHICS

The gameplay in TOMB RAIDER II is indentical to that in its predecessor. There have been no senous overhands here; most of the changes are minor tweaks, fixes, and additions.

Earn has a few new moves and a few new weapons. She now shows a new style of climbing and has the ability to

flap underwater and in the air. The game features a few water threats and some puzzles that require you to use her new moves. Pinally, there are a few instances in which Lara gets to pilot vehicles (a speedboat and a skimobile).

As for her weapons, the

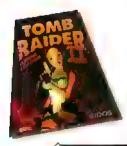
magnims from the original game are gone. In their place are full-blown automatic pistols. There is also a harpoon, a grenade-launcher, and an M-16. In inventory, the only additions are flares and three Dragon Statues, which signify secrets in each level

WITHIN YOUR GRASP This is the Temple of Xian, where the famed Dagger resides.

One of the more hyped-about changes in TOMB RAIDER II is Lara's famed ponytral. When I first heard about it, I scoffed. I must admit, though, that it did look pretty cool, as the ponytral reacts to the environment, swaying real-istically in the wind or water, or under the force of gravity

Another hyped graphics change is the dynamic lighting. It's also done well and is best demonstrated by either throwing a flare or firing a grenade down a dark tunnel. Lara has a limited supply of flares, though, so you may need to use your pistols (which still have unlimited ammo) as a substitute flashlight.

To complement the improvements in the graphics, Gore Design has enhanced the game's sound. There's more speech this time, as well as bettersounding weapons. The magninn and the Uzi used to share a very flat, duil firing noise, but now game sounds pack a punch



Price: \$49.95 System Requirements: Pentium 90 or better, Windows 95, 16MB RAM (32MB recommended) 1M8 hard-drive space, 4x CD ROM, Windows 95compatible sound and video cards 3D Support: Direct3D **Multiplayer Support:** Designer: Care Design Publisher: Eldos Interactive San Francisco, CA (800) 617-8737 www.eidosinteractive.com



WELCOME BACK Many of the new levels are outdoors or underwater, but the Tibetan foothils are reminiscent of Tomb Raiden

LESS TOMB RAIDING

Although the engine and gameplay are basically the same, the setting has undergone a significant change. There's less emphasis on tombs this time, as you explore levels ranging from the Catacombs of Talion and the Wreck of the Maria Doria to Venice and an Offshore Oil Rig.

The level design in this game has improved significantly. Many of the levels are more interesting architecturally, and the traps are a lot more devious. This game is definitely tailored for the TOMB RAIDER veteran, not the newbie Quite a few of the traps are based on the "die and restore" principle, in which you die when you first encounter the trap to see how it works, and then restore a

MASSIVE MACHINERY Toma Raider III adds many new textures for the various new levels, such as this underwater shipwreck.

saved game to tackle it seriously. You'll need to save a lot more frequently this time. While these traps were annoying, others simply required a good sense of timing and some quick thinking. A good example is the small gauntlet of razor blades, spikes, and boulders in the first level; consider it a test to see how well you'll do in the rest of the game. Between the levels, you'll sometimes get either a prerendered or in-game cut-seene detailing more of the story.

The enemy variety has also widened a bit. The previous game focused more on animals and exotic creatures. Now, we get animals, some exotic beasts, and a lot of humans. TOMB

RAIDER was slower paced, as the animals came at you every once in a while; but TOMB II's pace has been quickened with more human opponents populating the levels. The human opponents brandish weapons ranging from simple baseball bats to nasty flamethrowers. The animals look much better now, but the humans look primitive in comparison.

The game is improved, but I still have some issues with it.



LARA'S RIDE Now Lara gets to pilot speedboats and skimobiles in certain levels.

Core has added better lighting and textures, but there are still horrible clipping problems. Lara's arm often disappears into the wall, and in some rare cases, enemies waltz right through doors. Also, the plot is weak, with virtually no back story. Lara decides to go after the Dagger in the Great Wall... well, just because At least money was offered as the motivation in the original.

Finally, the biggest issue is a simple case of sequelitis. This is TOMB RAIDER but with more guns and better level design. Some people don't mind this: DOOM If did the same sort of thing, and it's not necessarily bad. But because this is essentially the same game, much of the freshness of the original is lost.

The bottom line is this: If you liked the first TOMB RAIDER, you'll probably like this one. They've made enough changes to make it interesting, but it's no longer breathtaking. If you didn't like the first game, this won't make you change your mind. Newcomers on their first date with Lata should be warned that TOMB II was made for veterans who completed the first game. A third installment is planned, so let's hope that Core pulls some new tricks out of its hat and gives us a better edition next time.

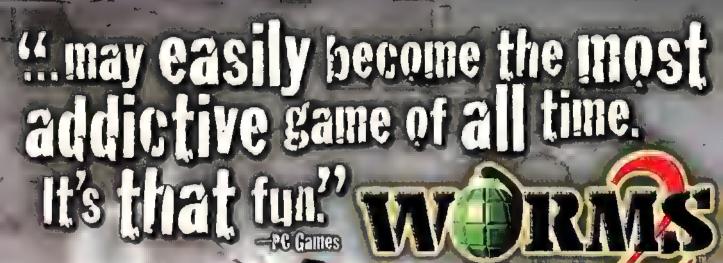
r unire is one thing i harned around frigid Tibet. I guess a from Town Alabon, it's that wetsult and bomber lacket could marketing can do wonders for be considered an improvement. a game. Eidos has managed to but she's still got those nearly create the most hyped character nonexistent short-shorts. And in the history of gamwhen she's in ing. Who also but a skimpy Lara could be the nightgown only fictional charand taunts acter in Time you at the conclusion Digital's List of ou know whom Influential People in the Computer the game was nade for Industry? It's also painfully It's too bad more emphasis was placed on obvious to whom Eldos was marketing cara's looks than on the game's content. If Core Design this game, Lara again had concentrated more on the sports a tight shirt and actual game, Towe II would've short-shorts through her adventures, which makes even less probably been a contender for sense now that she is traipsing action game of the year

APPEAL: Fans of the original, action gamers who like tough puzzles.

PROS: Some beautiful levels; better pacing and puzzles; improved graphics and sounds.

COMS: Weak plot; puzzles may annoy beginners; some of the old engine troubles remain.





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Manual of Submitted and Submit

Blue Wonder





Psygnosis Puts Out a Dazzling Sci-Fi Helicopter Shooter

by Scott A. May

I you've been waiting to buy a 3D-accelerated graphics card, Psygnosis may have come up with a reason you simply can't refuse: G-POLICE. Ported from the original PlayStation version (excellent in its own right), this Win 95 sci-fi shooter emerges as one of the fastest, most visually impressive areade games ever made. This isn't just empty praise. One look and you'll be a believer

The game begins with a lengthy FMV sequence to introduce the back story and the intricate plot. In the 21st century, Earth has been rendered a dead planet, thanks to years of environmental neglect, resource plandering, and war Nations and governments have toppled, and the entire planet is now controlled.

by a handful of greedy, global corporations. Flungry for new resources, humans have begun to colonize and nivage the worlds beyond Earth

One such space colony has sprouted on Callisto, one of Jupiter's moorts. Because there's no life-sustaining atmosphere on Callisto, the surface consists of a large complex of interconnecting domes. Some domes contain large urban sprawls, complete with massive skysenipers and busy spaceports. Outlying domes house smaller communities, farms, and mining operations.

To maintain law and order on colonies such as Callisto, Earth's corporate leaders have created a galactic police force called the G-Police. As Jeff Slater, a crusty war veteran and master pitot with an asteroid-sized chip on your shoulder, you join the G-Police to investigate the tragic, unsolved murder of your sister, a former G-Police pilot. Before you solve the murder, though, you have to play cop: tracking smugglers, securing somes, securing somes, securing somes, securing somes, securing somes.

and blasting various evildoers. Along the way, you'll uncover clues not only to your sister's death, but also to an ominious conspiracy that reaches directly into the corporations themselves.

CRY HAVOC

You begin C-POLICE piloting an assault vehicle called the DASA-Kamov gunship, a HAVOC-style helicopter anned to the teeth. Though futuristic by today's standards, this airship is considered a rickety bucket of bolts by the game's lead character. But therein lies its charm. While other shooters, sci-fi or not, outfit their players with the latest and greatest fighting machines, there's something romantic, à la Road Warrior, about placing a bruised and beaten hero behind the stick of a less-than-perfect vehicle. It not only offers a greater challenge, but also conveys the idea that true fighting spirit is measured by inner fortitude, not outward flash

'The gunship uses an arcade flight model, which is both good and bad.

Helicopter fanatics may consider it superficial, but then again, the game does not pretend to be a true flight sim. On the other hand, for anyone who has ever struggled to learn true helicopter flight dynamics, it's a welcome simplification. The truth is, this gunship flies and controls more like a hovercraft than a lichcopter Whatever your opinion of the flight model's realism, this is certain: Control is fast, tight, and responsive Novice pilots can go through several training missions in order to acquaint themselves with the gunship's navigational systems, maneuverability, and ordnance.



Price: \$49.99
System Requirements:
Pent um 133 (P166 recommended), Windows
95, 16MB RAM (32 MB recommended), 2MB hard-drave space. 4x
CD-ROM drive supports Direct Sound-compatible sound cards joysticks, MMX, and AGP technologies
3D Support: Direct3D AGP
Multiplayer Support:
None

Designer: Psygnosis Publisher: Psygnosis Foster City, CA (415) 655-8000 www.psygnosis.com



CATCH THE WAVE Gamers who have 3D accelerators will be overwhelmed by the stunning graphics in G-Pouce, such as this series of shock waves set off by your deadly bomb.



The most anticipated RPG of the year.

In the FORGOTTEN REALMS®, we've lived through foul pestilence, vicious battles, exorbitant taxes, and even the occasional dragon. But when HE showed up, things really started getting ugiye

Prepare to be immersed into a world of intrigue and mystery on a perilous quest to rescue a storied land from impending wars. Even your own soul is at stake as you and a party of adventurers become entangled in a dangerous riddle of betrayed alliances, dark prophecies and murder.

Will you become the unlikely hero of the story, or merely another of its unfortunate casualties? Before you answer, the big guy here might have something to say about its



Explore an immense, intricate game world - from cloud-covered mountains & rain drenched plains to dark catacombs & abandoned temples all meticulously rendered in lush, 16-bit SVGA graphics.



Invoke more than 100 spells - Freeze enemies with an icy blast from a Cone of Cold, or incinerate them with a searing stream of magical flame.



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Create your character from six AD&D® races and 26 different classes and subclasses. You control every attribute, down to skin and hair color, weapons, and armor * all accurately. depicted on-screen.

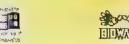








LOURS









Dúngcons&Dragons*





BARF BAG CITY Multiple camera views, such as this externat overhead shot, convey the depth and detail of the game world in G-Pouce.



LETHAL HARVEST Beyond the urban sprawl, G-Pouce missions also unfold in less hectic environs, such as this farmland biosphere.

THE DOGS OF WAR

Gameplay is comprised of some 35 missions, with fascinating PMV sequences interspersed to advance the story line, introduce new characters, and build upon the sinister plot. Missions are strictly linear, which means you must adequately complete one before heading to the next. Most missions have both primary and secondary goals. Failure to complete a goal requires that you start the mission again from scratch. Games can be saved between missions, but not in-flight. which makes some of the later, lengther sorties frustratingly difficult to finish. On a negative note, the first half of the game has some pretty repetitive missions. Persevere, however, it's well worth it.

The game defaults to first-person view, although multiple camera angles—such as chase, fly-by, and overhead—can be accessed via hotkeys.

There's plenty of heavy weaponry to assist and amuse you throughout the game. Your standard weapon is a nose-mounted 30mm fixed canaon, featuring

an extremely high fire rate and an annoying tendency to overheat. Other ordnance includes a variety of short-, medium-, and long-range missiles, bombs; lasers, plasma launchers; and pulse paralyzers.

The new weapons pack a wallop, but my favorites are definitely the starburst dispersion missiles, which launch in barsis of eight, and the 1000Kg bomb, which unleashes a shock wave unlike anything else you've ever seen.

EYE CANDY

Flere's the best part. C-POLICE features graphics that are arguably the most elabomite and fantastic to ever grace the computer screen. Although the game doesn't require a 3D-accelerated video card, its beauty can't be totally appreciated without one. Most missions take place in city domes, with myriad skysempers, each MIP-mapped with sturningly realistic textures, flashing lights, signs, and billboards. Like scenes from Blade Runner, these urban vistas are absolutely furious with activity, both on the ground and in the air.

Other graphic goodies include spectacular explosions, transparencies, light-source shading, and lens flares. If you don't have a beefy machine, you can toggle various graphics effects. Tested on a P233MMX with both 3D Blaster and Monster 3D cards installed, with all settings on high, the frame rate and control were absolutely liquid. The game is even smart enough to recognize multiple 2D/3D cards, allowing you to pick your preference before loading. Finally, this is one of the first games to support the new Pentium II with ACP technology

Bhazing action, resplendent graphics, and an intelligent story line — C-POLICE has it all. If you rate a game's enjoyment by its "wow" factor, put this one at the top of your list.

►APPEAL: Advanced-level sci-fi biast masters.

PPROS: Knockout 3D-enhanced graphics and sound effects; large variety of missions and locations; genulaely interesting story line.

>CON5: Steep system requirements; no multiplayer options; missions eventually become repetitive.



The End of Console Crud

or years, computer players have thumbed their collective noses at games ported from consoles, and for good reason. Typical console ports have been shoddy, designed simply to squeeze more revenue out of popular videogame titles. How else can you explain the likes of Mortal Kombat, Ten Pin Alley, or Madden Football on the PC?

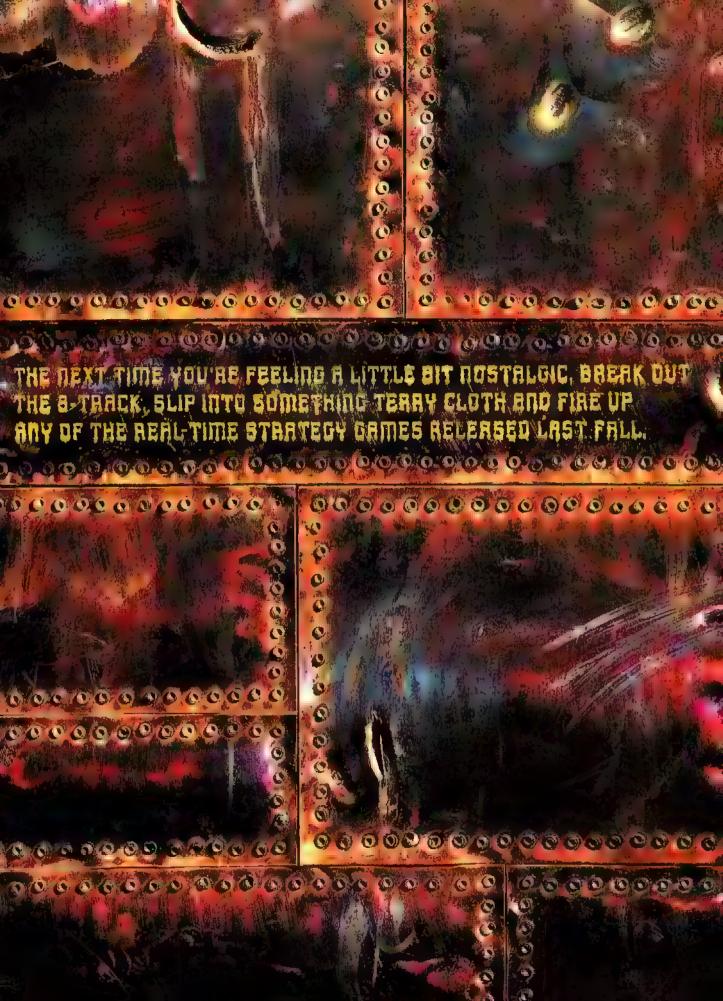
Psygnosis has changed all that with G-Pouce, a PlayStation conversion so good that it does more than merely raise the stakes for other publishers: It sets a whole new standard of excellence. From here on out, PC gamers should expect nothing less than what Psygnosis has painstakingly achieved. Helf, we should demand it.

Much credit goes to secand-generation programmers who now fully comprehend the power and potential of 3D accelerators. Let's admit it, PC gamers have always been secretly jealous of their console counterparts. What console games lacked in depth. they more than made up for with a combination of fast action and killer visuals, thanks to dedicated graphic processors. At long last, the tide has turned, thanks to advances in PC hardware that have been long overdue.

But the ultimate kudos should go to the new generation of console-to-PC conversion artists who finally take pride in their work.

Programmers like the in-house crew at Psygnosis are beginning to deliver quality products far beyond previous expectations.

So thanks, Psygnosis, for throwing down the gauntlet. G-Police proves how extraordinary console conversions can be.









Moto Chaser

by Kelly Rickards

ega has once again dipped into its huge library of arcade titles to bring a fast-paced motorcycle racer to the PC world — MANX TT, its 1995 motorcycle racing sim based on England's annual isle of Man Trophy Race.

Craphically, MANX TT is breathtaking, especially with a 3Dfx board. This is the first Sega PC game that looks better on the PC than in the arcades. Texture detail is vivid, with realistic polygonal models. The frame rate was smooth, never dipping below 24fps on a 3Dfx-enhanced P200MMX. Overall, MANX has a visual flair that's hard to fault.

MANX enjoyed only lukewarm success in the areades. Part of the problem is that

the game only had two tracks. Unfortunately, Sega didn't add any new tracks to this port. Since the game is based on the Isle of Man Trophy Race, there is really only one racing course in the game. Players can race a long and a short version of the main course, and the PC version adds reversed/mirrored versions of each track (so you can race them backwards), but that's it.

The gameplay is fast-paced and fun, but lack of variety really inhibits the overall playing experience. For what amounts to just a two-track game, MANX

TT does sport some decent features. There are four different modes of play: areade (the original two areade tracks), PC mode (extra mirror tracks), time trial (basic practice), and network (multiplay for eight).

In the end, MANX was a bittersweet game experience. I finally experienced a graphically rich conversion of a high-powered areade game, but couldn't find enough to keep me happy §

>APPEAL: Fans of arcade racers and hard-core Sega buffs.

>PROS: 3Dfx version offers true

arcade-quality graphics; accessible, fun gameplay.

PCONS: Too few tracks; very little replayability.



Price: \$30 00
System
Requirements:
Pentium 90,
Windows 95. 16MB RAM.
3D Support: 3D1x
Multiplayer Support:
Modem, serial link (2 ptay
ers), LAN (2-8 players), 1
CD per player
Publisher: Sega
(888) SEGASALES
www.sega.com

Sirch

SHORT BUT SWEET The gameplay in MANX TT is fun and easy. Before you know it, though, the game will be over.

REVIEW • QUAKE II

₱₱₱Continued from pg 123

DeathMatch levels that shipped with the first QUAKL.

On the upside, QII's DeathMatch players look much better and have a variety of skins, both make and female. In addition, there are three wave gestures you can flash opponents: the salute, the crotch-grab, and the bird.

HARDWARE ACCELERATION VS. SOFTWARE IMAGE QUALITY

QUAKE had 3D accelerator support for Rendition when it shipped, and it was ported to run on OpenCL, running best



BAD GUY GO BOOM Things, and monsters for that matter, blow up with great fanfare, complete with particles.

on 3Dfx. QII has again opted for OpenGL and has specific ports for 3Dfx and PowerVR. If you have a 2D/3D board with an OpenGL driver (like a Permedia 2–based board), QII should run accelerated on your system. When hardware accelerated, the effect is nothing short of stunning. Improved dynamic lighting, colored lighting, and higher polygon counts on the models all contribute to create a much more compelling effect. When the game runs in software, many of the lighting effects aren't present, and QII's image quality does suffer. Despite

the system requirements listed on the box, QII doesn't really run well unless you've got more than 32MB of system RAM. There was some lag in weapon switching on 32MB rigs. Some of this latency is built-in and designed to be part of the gameplay, but at times it would actually pause the game while it brought up the animation for the new weapon.

IN THE AFTERMATH

Does QII deliver on the promise of being a solid sequel? Well, in a

word, yes. There are a few missing ingredients—co-op multiplayer and specific DeathMatch levels, to name two—but the improved single-player gameplay and stellar lighting effects (when running accelerated), not to mention a plausible back story, do take QII beyond the QUAKE experience. If you're a QUAKE zealot, then QUAKE II is an absolute must-have. If you're wondening what all the fuss is about, pick up a copy and find out. §

>APPEAL: Action gamers looking to dive head-long into visceral mayhem and, on yeah, beautiful scenery.

▶ PROS: Improved single-player gameplay; addictive multiplayer action; immersive, beautiful graphics; colored lighting effects in hardware acceleration.

>CONS: Al is still pretty dim-witted; some obstacles become tedious; no specific Death-Match levels; no co-op multiplayer mode (yet).





There's only one thing more torturous than playing Deathtrap Dungeon.









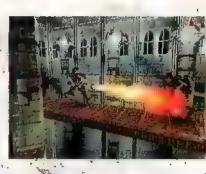






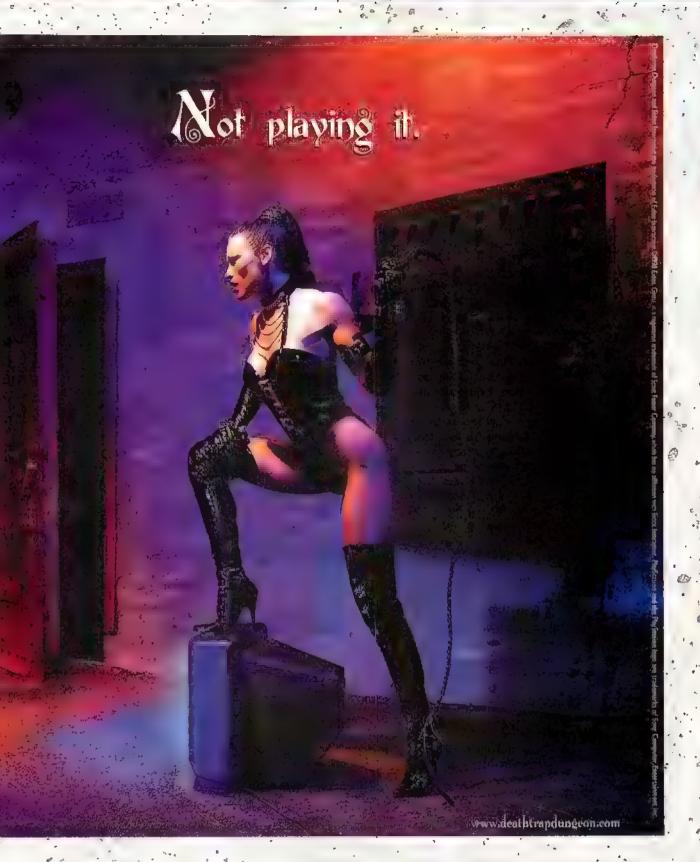
DEATHTRAP







Consider it your battle cry. Then bring on the skeletal warriors, zombies and over 50 other undead denizens. Each one is a chance to slice and thee like a Ginsu baile gone bad. An opportunity to master the 13 death implements at



your disposal. Or play the PC version and leave the other on-line players crying for more. Because in these 10 cavernous levels of evil traps. It's all about blurring that fine line between pleasure and pain. And just when you thinh you can't take it any longer, consider the alternative,





Flat Tire

Test Drive 4 Will Test Your Patience and Drive You Nuts

by Gordon Goble

played any other racing games lately?

on't believe everything you read On the box of Accolades Test Drive 4. It says in big, bold print, "Test Drive 4 is the clear choice for BLST RAC-ING CAME OF 1997.1 This leaves me with but a single question: Has the author of this drivel

TD4 is the latest in the long-running TEST DRIVE line, and it continues in the same direction as its immediate prede-CESSOR TEST DRIVE, OFF ROAD. Unfortunately, that direction is downfull. Accolade has dumped the four-wheeling trucks and gone back to the original TEST DRIVE format of exotic cars, high speeds, and pavement. It doesn't help.

Consider TD4 a substandard sibling to EAs NEED FOR SPEED II, from TD4's copycat introduction right on through.



The game does offer 6 twisting highway and backroad courses from around the globe, as well as 10 vehicles, including "exotics" like the Dodge Viper, and "musele ears" such as a '69 Chevy Camaro. So far so good.

In stark contrast to the lameness that surrounds the rest of the game, the driving physics model is surprisingly convincing. From general acceleration to handling and braking to the differences between each vehicle, the sensations are quite believable. The problem? All of the above applies only when your speed is at a

musumusi.

STINGRAY Test Drive 4 does offer some very cool cars, including Corvettes.



BUMP AND RUN Although the tracks look nice, the erratic gameplay at high speeds is too frustrating.

THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Once you really start moving, TD4 becomes far more areadelike than any "test dave" should be. If you ever played POLE POSITION, you've got the picture

Subtlety? Forget it. Crank your joystick hard to the left, crank it hard to the right, and repeat. You'll bounce around some and, if you're lucky, may go a full half-minute without blasting into one of your unintelligent peers, oneoming traffic, or the annoying invisible barrier protecting the nonintemetive scenery, Atleast Accolade had the good sense to build in some interesting aerobatics

Craphics, meanwhile, are a mixed bag, with more bad than good. On the upside, the racing environments are realistically rendered, with vaned, remarkable settings. There are nice touches like authentic dashboards, semitransparent smoke, and airplanes that fly overhead. On the downside, the scenery is cursed with tons of pop-through-you'll see some of the outside world from inside a timpel, and sometimes you'll even drive through ears.

The frame rate suffers mightily if you don't have a 3Dfs. card, unless you play

in low-res mode or a half-size window.

Off the track, TD4 is a cumbersome mess with no mouse support whatsoever. It also forces you to reselect options every time you load the game. To make matters worse, you'll have to choose a steering wheel just so the game recogruzes the buttons on your joystick.

After all this, is it any surprise that a season cannot be saved? Or that the race distance and entrants are fixed? Or that there are no car customization options? Or that, even with more than 200MB of installed files, CD access is everywhere. and you have to endure several screens of legal documentation every time you begin the game? I thought not. At least TD4 comes with an uninstall feature. %

APPEAL: Fans of bang-bang arcade racing with a dynamic driving model.

PROS: Circuits are challenging, thoughtful, and realistic; cars exhibit individual characteristics.

COMS: Slew of interface, control, and execution problems; graphics are bad on non-

3Dfx machines: Al drivers that are way too fast and stupid; driving physics are nonexistent at high speeds.





Price: \$49.95 System Requirements: Pant um 90, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, 220MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM drive; supports al major sound cards. 3D Support: 3Dfx Multiplayer Support: Serlal, modem (2 play ers, 1 CD per player) LAN (2-8 players, 1 CD per player) Designer: Pitbull Syndicate Publisher: Accolade, Inc. San Jose, CA 800 245 7744

www.accolade.com

DEATHTRA P

Dark, dungeonous 3D tantasy.



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Pinball Lizard

by Shane Mooney

here finally seems to be a trend among developers to put more story into their action games. Sierra evidently decided that even a pinball game could use a good plot, and believe it or not, it works.

3D ULIDA PINHALL LOST CON-DINENT'S opening animation shows a small plane erash-landing on a Lost World brimming with thunder lizards. It's up to you to guide the plane's three passengers through the perils of the Lost Continent... by playing puball

The 16 tables found throughout the island are multimedia extravaganzas bursting with glorious sound effects, impressive graphies, and surprisingly entertaining gameplay. On one table,

you'll use a pinball to take down a carnivorous dinosaur, then navigate that same ball into a strategically placed cave to advance further through the steaming jungle. As you progress, more of the story (as well as additional supporting characters) is revealed. While most pinball games motivate you solely to beat the current high score, this one actually adds an adventure element to the mix

But, LOST CONTINENT is not without flaws. This game is going to tap your hardware pretty heavily. Even on a Pentium

11/266, the ball would sometimes freeze momentarily. And, at times, the goal of each table was just too obscure. Plus, there's no printed manual, only measly online documentation.

But all these minor annoyances are easily countered by the realistic pinball physics, immersive environments, and plot-driven play &

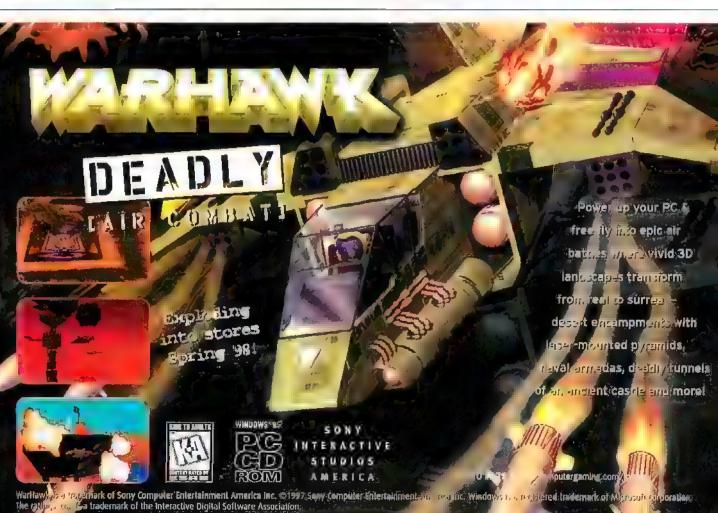
>APPEAL: Pinball fans looking for a solid shot in the arm for their favorite gaming genre.

>PROS: Realistic pinball "feel," superb multimedia elements.

CONS: A bit too easy, some table goals are obscure, pinball purists will decry the break from tradition.



Price: S44 95
System Requirements:
486/DX66, Windows 95
8MB RAM
30 Support: None,
Multiplayer Support:
Hotseat (2-4 players)
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
(800) 757-7707
www.sterra.com



Extraterrestrial Ennui



SouthPeak Can't Cover Up MEN IN BLACK'S Basic Flaws

by Steve Poole

lancing over the games based on movies released in the past few years, you might wonder why any game publisher even pursues the concept anymore. STAR TREK, GENERATIONS, THE LAWAMOWER MAN, BLOWN AWAY, JOHNNY MNEMONIC, CONCO

all these and others served only to prove there's a lot more to making a great game than acquiring a hot movie license. In fact, Bethesda's SKYNET and LacasArts' X-WING and DARK FORCES games were about the only movie-inspired offerings that delivered high-quality play.

ANOTHER MOVIE, ANOTHER GAME

Still, the appeal of leveraging boxoffice success to boost PC game sales is strong, especially when the movie is last summer's smash hit Men in Black. On the face of it, MIB seems like a pretty good choice if you're going to make a movie-based game - its bizarre aliens, high-tech weapons, and tongue-in-cheek plot are a nice springboard for an actionadventure game. Unfortunately, MIB: THE CAME suffers from a double whammy: Senous gamers will be dissatisfied with the lack of depth, and casual gamers lured by the movie tie-in will be left cold by the game's average graphics and lethargic voice-acting.

The engine takes its due from games like ALONE IN THE DARK and BIOFORGS From a third-person perspective, you control Agents J. K., or L. (the Jones, Smith, and Piorentino characters from



PUZZLE ME THIS One of the game's few bright points is this challenging puzzle in the Amazon

the flick) as they investigate mysteries in the Arctic, the Amazon, and the ficuitous Frales Island. Complementing your standard MIB pistol are exotically named weapons, such as the "Series 4 De-Atomizer" and the "Pulsar Arm Cannon." In some cases, though, you'll have to square off barchanded against evil aliens and humans.

MIB does add a few traditional adventure-game elements to its run-and-gam gameplay. Most puzzles are straightforward—use an inventory item on an object in the game world—but a couple of missions require you to solve some slightly tricky logic puzzles, too.

MUCH LESS THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

MIB has the core components of a good game, but for various reasons they simply don't add up to very much fun. Remember those fancy weapons? Well, you can carry only one on each mission. Not that it matters much, since each weapon looks drab and packs a nearly identical punch. I land-to-hand combat can be needlessly difficult because of perspective problems, but then again, once you master the keys, outlighting your enemies becomes a breeze.

AIIB has numerous other shortcomings—nonconfigurable keyboard commands, no gamepad support, strained attempts to duplicate the film's humor, weary voice-acting, too few alien types, and a kludgy interface for exploration. Look past those problems and you'll find perhaps the biggest drawback of all-lifs way too short. Set aside one or two sticking points, and you're looking at somewhere between one and three hours per mission for intermediate players.

Duplicating the excitement and fun of a movie such as Men in Black at a computer game is a fough row to hoe, but that doesn't change the fact that MIB THE CAME is, at best, merely average. Given what gamers have to choose from, that's just not good enough.

APPEAL: Gamers who are looking for a watered-down version of the movie with average action and puzzle-solving.

▶PROS: A decent mix of action and puzzle-solving.

CONS: Too few and undifferentiated weapons; uninspired voice-

acting; drab allens; cumbersome interface; too little and too shallow gamenlay





Price: \$39.99
System Requirements:
Pentium 100, Windows
95, 16MB RAM (32MB
recommended), 10MB
hard-drive space, 4x CDROM 2MB video card,
SoundBlaster 16-compatible sound card

3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support:

None Designer: Grgawatt

Studios Publisher: SouthPeak Interactive Cary, NC (919) 677-4499

www.southpeak.com





Excali-bore

Sirtech's New 3D Action-Adventure Game Is Anything But Magical

by Mark Clarkson

n 2555, the megalomaniac Delavar decides the one thing he needs to cement his plans for world conquest as the fabled sword Excalibur Delavar invents a time machine and sends a few of his plugniglies back to Camelot to snatch the blade.

Magician invents a time spell of his own to jump into the future and retneve the stolen blade. Now, he just needs to get a champion to single-handedly fight legions of evil inture baddies, evade myriad traps, and wrest Excalibur from Delavar's villamous grasp. Merlin chooses his young niece, Beth, for this beroje task.

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

adventure, EXCALIBUR 2555 A.D.

The Earth of Sertech's new action-

(E2555), is a postapocalyptic hellhole

Everyone lives underground in cramped

complexes, the upper levels of which are

populated by filthy peasants, skeletons,

You fight your way through the levels

using one of two awkward, third-person

viewpoints. The game boasts 600 foen-

tions, but many are empty hallways.

There's little sense of continuity since

you cannot see from one room into the

next; open doorways reveal only black-

ness. Worse still, every time you leave a

room, there's a pause while the next

thugs, and wizards, just like medieval



NICE SWORD Merlin's niece Beth, sans pants, arrives in the year 2555 to retneve Excal bur. You must guide her from sometimes awwward points of view.

card (A promised patch should be available by the time you read this.)

The documented Direct3D mode was missing entirely. The 8-bit software emulation mode did work, but the results were so ugly that they made me long for the days of Infocom's wonderful text

games. The buckgrounds are warped and pixelated, the people look hideous, and the special lighting effects are agonizangly slow, even on a P2-266.

If the power-ups hadn't flashed, I would never have found them against the splotchy backgrounds. Secret doors, crucial to solving the game, were sometimes totally indistinguishable from the rest of the wall

in true chehé adventure
form, you're always running
around on errands to get this
item to trade for this other item,
which in turn needs to be traded for yet
another item. In one level, you need a
key mold. You get it by trading a bottle of
whiskey for it, but to get the whiskey, you
need to trade a locket. For the locket,
you need to kill a robber, which you can
do only after trading medicine for a key
to unlock the room where the robber
waits. To get the medicine, you need to
offer a certain paper in trade, which you

get after shattering a block with a spell. That spell you can get only by grabbing the spell components from a room. To get to that room, you need to throw several switches guarded by a gauntlet of sparking electrical cables. Why couldn't i just buy the key mold?

Still, it's not all bartering and switch throwing. There's a little fighting as well Unfortunately—and surprisingly—the fighting is the most tedious part of all.

£2555's controls are extremely awkward, and there is no save

game. Instead, the game automatically remembers the lughest level you've completed. But if you die at the end of a level, you have no choice but to play it over. My advice? Save yourself the trouble and find a good game to play.



ERRAND GIRL Everyone in the world of Excalibua 2555 A.D. wants something from you.

Price: \$39 95 System

Requirements:
Pent um 100, 16MB
RAM, 20MB liard-drive
space, 2x CD-ROM
dr ve. SVGA v.deo
card, supports Sound
Blaster-compatible
sound cards
3D Support: 3Dfx,
Direct3D,
Multiplayer Support:
None

Designer: Telstar Electronic Studios Publisher: Sirlech Ogdensburg, NY (800) 447-1230 www.sir-tech.com A VOODDO HEX

room loads from the CD

England

E2555 promised great graphics and amazing lighting effects, but I didn't see them. 3Dfx mode didn't work on my Intergraph Intense 3D Voodoo Rush **PAPPEAL:** Gamers who are gluttons for punishment.

PROS: Full CD speech.

PCONS: Ugly graphics; uninteresting locations; poor user interface; boring and repetitive gameplay.





Miller----Did

you hear that?

ORTEGA---Yeah...

there's something back there . . .

Miller----Ortega. . .

ORTEGAL

ALIENS



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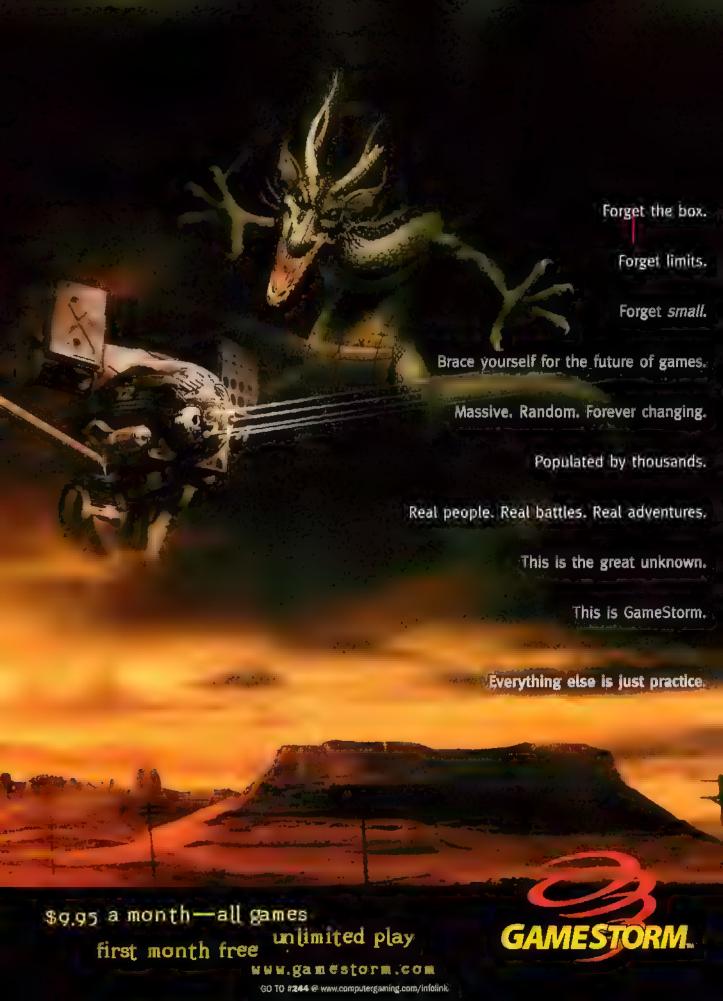




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Marguna listant the aragin is alose

Sir. Trent: what spells do you have left?

Margana MONE - t used my last on the states

Sir. Trent: then all we have it a sword . . .
I'll go slone

Morganii no! Sir.Trent!!

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GO TO #237 @ www.computergaming.com/infolink

by Gordon Goble

nyone who fancies himself a PC racer knows the Neud For Spled formula. Take some truly exotic production and prototype automobiles, place them on several imaginative fantasy tracks, and race to the finish. The graphics are strong, the courses are varied and savagely challenging, and the car model is a lovely mixture of areade fun and simulation precision.

But that's only part of the story. NEED FOR SPEED is packed with extra good-



ROAD HOG The game cam captures a Bomber BFS muscling its way past a Mustang Mach III.

ies — immersive and flavorful stuff that EA didn't have to include, but did. There are visual effects (rear-view mirrors, authentic dashboards, multiple viewing options, end-over-end collisions), audio enhancements (tire squeal, suspension crunch), and a wealth of options (single race, tournament or knockout round; single- and multiplayer).

NEED FOR SPEED II SE keeps up the good work, and the bad. The AI drivers don't race; they shadow. Crash a couple

times, and the drivers will slow down to keep pace with you. Set a record pace, and the rest of the pack will suddenly surge to right behind your tail. Drivers would sooner smack into you than avoid you, and scenery is often guarded by an invisible "force fleld" that sometimes juts absurdly into the roadway.

What SE does add, though, are four new ears (including some '50s muscle-cars), one new track (albeit a good one, along the

Mexican coast), and 3Dfx support that

beautifles an already pretty game.

If you own NFS II, don't bother dropping valuable coinage on the mild upgrades of SE when number III is invariably around the corner. If, on the other hand, you've never expenenced NEED FOR SPEED, get enlightened.

DAPPEAL: Any PC racer who didn't buy NEED FOR SPEED II.

▶PROS: Arguably the best action racing game; new track, new cars, and 39tx support make the game hetter.

Minor enhancements; same NFSII problems, such as forcefield guarded scenery and dublous Al driver abilities.



Price: \$49.95
System
Requirements: Pentium
90.16MB RAM,
Windows 95
30 Support: 30tx
Multiplayer Support:
Null modem, modem (2)

Multiplayer Support:
Null modem, modem (2 players), IPX LAN (2-8 players), 1 CO per player Publisher: Electronic Aris (800) 245 4525
www.ea.com

NETWAR • REVIEW ★1

Net Loss

by Robert Coffey

ome people have never met a bandwagon they couldn't jump on. For example, someone apparently told Headland that people like games that pit them against other humans. The odious result is NETWAR. God forbid that these guys ever hear about MYST.

NETWAR serves up a heavy dose of

hackneyed areade action, in which gamers maneuver one of four virtually identical characters across various killing fields. Power-ups, including 10 different vehicles, help you take out other players. There are three different modes of play: team play; multiround deathmatches; and crowded, anarchic free-for-alls. It's all pretty tepid stuff

Lame gameplay is bad enough, but NETWAR has other problems. Characters may suddenly lose the ability to shoot when running diagonally, and the game is crash-prone as well. Trying to join free-for-alls may dump you all by yourself onto a map where no one joins you. Worse, there are some significant server problems—bad news for an Internet-only game. At times, I could only connect to one overworked server. When all its servers are running, NETWAR has no



LIGHTS ON, NOBODY HOME NETWAR has lots of players blowing each other up, but it also has numerous glitches and lame gameplay. latency problems, but once it's crowded, forget about it

The game also suffers from "shadow frags," where it reports that you died even when you were nowhere near the action — considering that player scores are posted, it can get undeservedly embarrassing.

If you want military, areade action, get some quarters and find an areade with MEIAL STAIC, Skip NETWAR \$

PAPPEAL: Give me a minute, I'm thinking, I'm thinking.

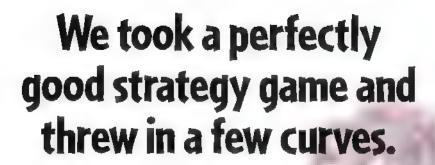
PROS: There is a \$100,000 sweepstakes for play-

problems; server problems; crash problems; lackof-fun problems.



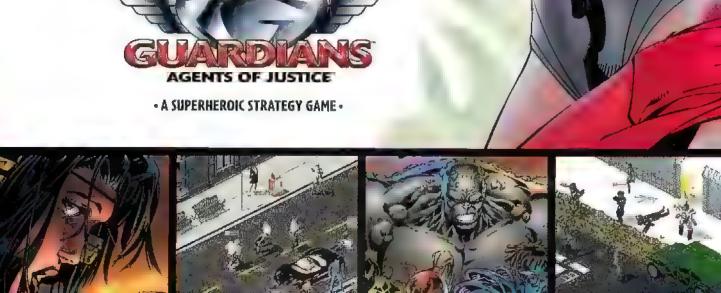
Price: \$39.95
System
Requirements:
Pentium 90, Windows
95, 16MB RAM
3D Support: None
Multiplayer Support:
Internet (2-30 players),
1 GO per player.
Publisher: Headland
Digital Media, Inc.
www.netwar.com





o ahead and stare. You've never seen anything like Guardians: Agents of Justice." Never before has a game so expertly mixed resource management and intense superheroic battle. Never before has the army in a strategy game been a handful of mutant, superbuff enforcers out to save tomorrow's planet from its own scum. And never before have there been such shapely superheroes. as easy on the eyes as they are rough on the rib cage. Guardians: Agents of Justice is the superhero strategy game where you call the shots. You can even customize your own mighty saviors, in case ours fail to meet your needs. (Somehow, we doubt it.)









www.microprose.com

Rekindle Your Youth.





Real Combat. Plastic Men.

Mass Irritation

by Tahsin Shamma

game with the name MASS
DESTRUCTION is bound to elicit a testosterone-pumped fever for devastation. Well, settle down, because this game won't invoke anything but extreme boredom. MASS
DESTRUCTION is the kind of game that's

1000 022 010000100

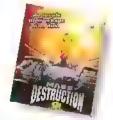
KILL THY NEIGHBOR The suburbs will never be the same once your tank rolls into town.

great for console gaming, but mediocre in the more complex world of PC games.

The basic premise behind the game? Blow stuff up. Story and realism has been tossed out the window in favor of the most simplistic, single-minded gameplay. Basically, you dove a tank in

third-person perspective through a series of missions to destroy target objectives. There are missions that require you to rescue a hostage or avoid destroying specific buildings, but for the most part, everything begs for annualation

'The first time I played the game, it was cool.' The explosions are big and impressive, despite the mediodre graphics But every time I played it thereafter it left me flat. For a game like this, the third-



person
perspective
is a hindrance You're
not commanding a tank into a heavy
barrage of mortar fire; you're driving a
remote-controlled toy through a free
enacker-laden obstacle course. All in all,
MASS DESTRUCTION does simplistic 2D
shooting well, Unfortunately, simplistic
2D shooting duesn't amount to much
fun gameplay.

PAPPEAL: Anyone fond of blowing up everything in sight.

PROS: Cool variety of weapons; some tactical

tank strategy.

COMS: Weak
graphics; limited
gameplay; too
simplistic.



Price: \$34 99
System
Requirements:
Pentrum 90
Windows 95 or DOS 6.22.
16MB RAM
3D Support: None
Multiplayer Support; IPX
LAN (2-4 players) 1 CD
per player
Publisher: ASC Games

(206) 655-0032

www.ascgames.com

by 3Dfx.

SPEED SPEED SPEED SPEED SPEED

60 frames per second. Ducking and weaving becomes an Olympic event. You'll have to develop a new set of reflexes just to keep up.

Speed.

Best Hardware. Best Software.

TWA Traped To Vesseld Crop "No immograture countrary of Enchance Aria. FIFA Read To Vesseld Crop "Se' Immigrat and involvment in all Electronic Aria. PIFA William Income product of the PIFA Read To World Crop "Se' is a trademist or registered kead-mark of Economic Aria of its wheely invested analysis for the U.S. and/or other countries. In 1807 Electronic Aria, All Eliginor Production, Inc. All Prights Production.

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Monkey Shines



With a Treasure Chest of Big Laughs, THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND IS a Comic Classic

by Jeff Green



Internost gamers associate LaicasArts with their Star Wars games, for some, the company will always be revered as the purveyors of some of the greatest comic

adventure games of all time. With SAM & MAX HIT TIPE ROAD, DAY OF TIPE.

TENTACLE, and the two MONSTY
ISLAND games, LucasArts virtually created its own genre—a winning combination of Warner Brothers cartoon—style animation and humor with traditional adventure gaming.

Now, after a hiatus of three years, LucasArts returns to adventure gaming in a big way with THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND, a game that proves to be not just a worthy successor to the MONKEY ISLAND series, but is — quite easily—the most entertaining adventure game of 1997.

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR GUY

For those unfamiliar with the series, the MONKEY ISLAND games tell the ongoing tale of hapless, would-be pirate Guybrush Threepwood and his struggle against his nemesis, the evil undead pirate LeChuck, and the woman caught between the two: Guybrush's true love, Elame Marley.

As THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND opens, in a beautifully animated cut-scene, the lame "It was all just a dream" ending of MONKEY ISLAND 2 has been conveniently forgotten (it's explained, kind of, later in the game), and we find Guybrush adrift at sea, hungry and thirsty and—typical for Guybrush—oblivious to the food and drink drifting by under his nose. Before he knows it, he's in the middle of a cannon battle between Elame and LeChuck, and in no lime at all, he finds himself a prisoner aboard LeChuck's ship.

As Guybrush, you must first find a way to escape from LeChuck's ship. Once you do escape and drift ashore, you unwittingly place a cursed ring on Elame's finger, turning her to solid gold To add insult to injury, the solid-gold Elaine is then stolen by pirates. Your primary objectives in the game are, of course, to search for a way to remove the curse and then find Elaine.

BARREL O' PUZZLES

MONGY ISLAND is a very structured, six-act story, but within that framework there's a great deal of nonlinear action. Most of it takes place on two large islands, on which you can freely travel between locations and solve puzzles in a somewhat (though not always) random order. There are also a few places where the game makes you confront a specific predicament — such as being swallowed by a snake, trapped in quicksand, or trying to get your shipmates to stop singing — and won't let you proceed mittly ou've figured it out.

Anyone who has ever played a LucasArts adventure will be right at home in CURSE—no big changes have

been made to the same SCUMM engine that has driven all their adventure games up through FULL, THROTTLE and THE DIG a few years back. Now, however, the interface is as scannless as could be and is all but invisible onscreen, leaving is much real estate as possible for the game's stylish, meticulously drawn graphics—the best they've ever done

The gameplay, too, is nothing we haven't seen before; for the most part, it's standard point-and-click, inventory-based puzzle-solving. The game can be played on two settings, regular or "mega monkey," which is harder, but essentially just



System Requirements: Pentium 90, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, PCI graphics card, 4x CD-ROM drive, Win 95-compatible 16-bit sound card 3D Support: None Multiplayer Support: None

Ack by, Larry Ahern Publisher: LucasArts Entertainment Company San Rafael CA (415) 985-8227 www.lucasarts.com

Designers: Jonathan



AVAST, YE SCURVY DOG This weasely lemonade vendor (played by Gary Coleman) is just one of the memorably comic characters Guybrush Threepwood must face in The Curse of Mowcey Island.



SEA CHANTEY HELL How to stop the pirates from singing? These guys are good, so you better find a word they can't rhyme.



LEMONHEAD, MEET TOFUHEAD Getting friendly with the natives on Blood Island means sticking a slab of wet tofu on your head

adds more puzzles (or more steps to the same puzzles). Regardless of the setting, the puzzles are abundant and, for the most part, fairly simple—though they're tough enough to keep you from breezing through without a challenge

The greatest thing about the gameplay is that, as in all LucasArts adventures, the designers consciously acknowledge that they're operating in a cartoon world. In fact, they revel in the absurdities of such a world. Thus, rather than try to offer some kind of half-baked "realistie" explanation as to how Guybrush could possibly carry around such things as a head-sized block of tofu, the game simply has him shove it casually down his pants.

What's particularly cool is that despite the fairly silly nature of what you pick up or how much you can carry, the puzzles themselves follow an internal logic—and that keeps the game on solid ground. In the game's most memorably grotesque puzzle, for example, you have to figure out how to get a tattoned map off the back of a sunbather. It'd never happen in the real world—! hope—but the way you do it here makes perfect game sense. LucasArts also does the right thing in

terms of never letting you really screw yourself over. You can't die (except in one of the game's most memorable puzzles, in which dying is the object) and you'll never enter a new section of the game without the minimum of what you need to complete it

The only part I could have done without is the indiculous, areade-style ship combat in the middle of the game. Mercifully, you can loggle if to a very simple setting. The second part of the combat—ducling insults with the enemy ship captains—is hilarious, but goes on a tad too long.

WATCHOO TALKIN' BOUT?

The highlight of this game, of course, is the dialogue. LateasArts writes furnier scripts than anyone else, including most of Hollywood these days, and CURSE OF MONKET ISLAND features humor writing of the highest order. Whereas dialogue can often be a chore in adventure games—something to slog through to get

the necessary clues — it's a complete joy here. As you choose your responses to the people you run into, you'll find your-self actively following dialogue trees that deliberately, blatantly have nothing to do with solving the game, just so you can get to the next joke. The designers waste no opportunity to be shamelessly silly an every conversation, yet they never penalize you for following useless paths — the correct choice will always be there when you're ready to proceed

The game features the best comic voice-acting since, well, FULL.
THROTHE, with one memorable character after another taking the stage, including a shifty lemonade vendor (played wonderfully by Gary Coleman), a snooty, please-hit-me cabana boy for an exclusive beach club, and, best of all, a disembodied skull named Murray, who if he had a shoulder, would have a very large chip on it. Murray, like Kramer on Semfeld, manages to steal every scene he's in If he had legs, he'd walk away with the game.

THAT'S IT?

Civen all the time and energy spent to create comic payoffs for even minor puzzles and conversations throughout MONKEY ISLAND, it seems odd, then, that the ending — the game's only real disappointment — should be so abrupt and perfunctory, as if the designers suddenly ran out of time, money, or inspiration. It's still funny — especially if you sit through the credits — yet after a terrific buildup, there's really no payoff.

Still, the game is so great until then that there's no sense in denying it a perfeet rating, Just as FALLOUT did recently for the reeling RPC genre, MONKEY ISLAND provides a case study in how to do things right, without reinventing the wheel For those who have been turned off to the adventure game genre by the overabundance of portentous Myst clones or feeble FMV mysteries, THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND is the perfeet tonic. Easily one of the best adventure games of the year, it joins LucasArls' hallowed pantheon of comic classics. Even those who've never played an adventure game might want to check it out. Computer gaming rarely gets more entertaining than this. %



OH NO, NOT AGAIN Meet Guybrush's inner child near the end of Curse of Monkey Island Don't worry, It's a temperary condition.

PAPPEAL: All adventure gamers, tans of the old LucasArts comic adventures, pirate fetishists.

PROS: Just about everything: outstanding animation, plot, dialogue,

and puzzles add up to the most satisfying adventure of the year.

quickly; final cutscene is a letdown.





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envelop the City you protect whether you're there or not, and then continue to prey upon you as you ponder your next move. But, there is a ray of hope-you simply have to find it. www.darkearth.com



Sharp as a Blade



BLADE RUNNER Is an Entertaining, Original, and Faithful Re-creation of the Sci-Fi Film Classic

by Allen Greenberg

"This was not called execution. It was called retirement

hese words, backed by Vangelis' masterful score, mark the opening of one of the most powerful sciencefiction films of the 1980s. Westwood Studios has now adapted Blade Runner to adventure gaming, and a very faithful adaptation it is at that Indeed, it's safe to say that no other film has been so faithfully re-created on a computer.

Fanatics of the film should know, however, that the game mirrors only the

tone and style of the film-it does not follow the same plot. Cone is the soul-searching Rick Deckard, the reluctant police/hunter of the film In his place is fledgling Blade Runner Ray McCoy, who is far too worried about getting on with his job to ston and wonder whether he had ever retired a

human by mistake. As McCoy, your task is to uncover and "retire" replicants who exist illegally on Earth. How he finishes in the story is up to you.

POINT AND SHOOT

It's Los Angeles in the year 2019, and during the course of the game you will travel from the city's highest pinnacle to Its lowest dregs. Your goal, at least initially, is to track down replicants: those artifieral humans now outlawed except for use in outer space. Lately, they have been showing up on Earth with a senously bad attitude toward its few remaining animals, as evidenced by more than one massacre. What's behind the slaughter? Could it be the replicants are trying to hide something?

BLADE RUNNER unfolds in five acts. and the conclusion of the game depends upon how you play. The possible

endgames vary greatly and range from the complete wipeout of the Earthbound replicants to your total alliance with them.

The game's controls are fairly simple You control McCoy's movement with the mouse. Blue cursors indicate possible exits, while green arrows indicate that some type of interaction is possible Right-clicking draws your weapon and brings up a targeting reticle. The early portion of the game allows several episodes of target practice, but, unfortunately, much of this takes place at quite a distance away, so the

participants appear quite tiny There is a fair

amount of shooting action in general, particularly toward the end of the game.

You don't have an inventory to work with. While you can gather items and put them to your advantage later in the game, you cannot examine, manipulate, or use these items in any way Questioning characters is an important part of the game, and their answers are recorded for later reference. You have no control over the questions you ask, but different ones appear depending on your prior experiences as well as the attitude you assume. Missing the plot leads early





CITY LIGHTS BLADE RUNNER beautifully re-creates the stylish, moody atmosphere of the classic Ridley Scott film.



Price: \$49 99 System Requirements: Pentium 90, 16MB RAM, 175MB harddrive space 4x CO-ROM drive, 16-bit SVGA card with 2MB RAM Microsoft-compatible mouse, Win 95-supported sound card

30 Support: None Multiplayer Support: None

Designer: Westwood Studios Distributor: Virgio

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REVIEW . BLADE RUNNER



PHOTO SHOP Zero in on the game clues using your trusty Esper, the same photo-manipulation tool used by Harrison Ford in the film

in the game can lead to incomplete questioning later on.

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Besides McCoy, the game features a host of other memorable characters. Crystal Steel is a female Blade Runner who has a fondness for McCoy and often saves his hide from perforation and other abuse. McCoy's superior—and frequently the first to call McCoy into action—is Guzza. Although he is only temporarily filling the post, Guzza has earned the respect and admiration of his fellow officers, but his gruff exterior may hide some mysterious secrets.

The two major replicants are Clovis and Sadik, who are responsible for the game's imital massacres. McCoy's death frequently crosses their mind, and they are more than slightly inclined to follow

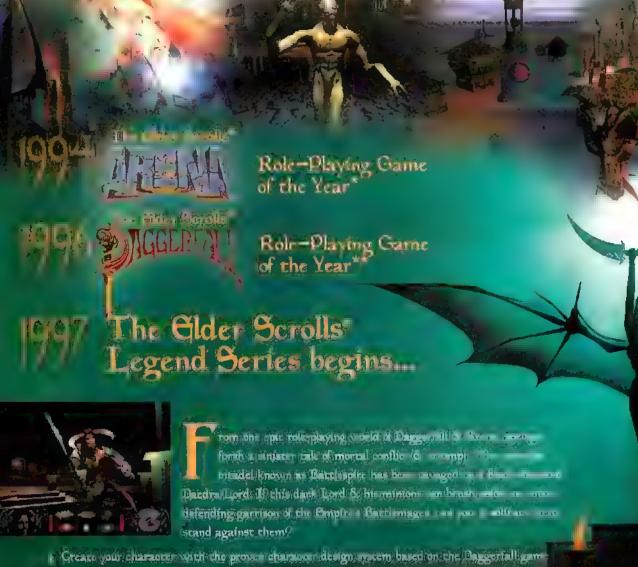
their instincts. Then there are the twins— Lather and Lance who share an unusually common point of view. Finally, there's Latey By all appearances a 14-

year-old girl with pink hair, she regrets the harm she may have caused. The question of her guilt, however, seems to follow her wherever she travels. There are many others to be sure, and each of them has an effect on both McCoy and the story.

During the course of the game, you can record class about people and events in a hand-held computer called the Knowledge Integration Assistant, or



LARA WHO? BLADE RUNNER features some of the most incredible 3D modeling in any game to date, as shown in this cut-scene between McCoy and the fetching Crystal Steel.



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- Wage war in multi-player model Team va. computer, team ve team or the ultimate Deathmatch via IPX or Internet.

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KIA. This device keeps track of conversations, key thoughts, photos, and other important information.

Fans of the film will remember the crucial scene in which Deckard produces a photograph by speaking to a computer. You have to use your mouse, but the computer work is still an important factor in the story. A gadget called the "Esper" does the work and is used several times in the course of the game.

IN THE MOOD

Graphically, BLADE RUNNER is nothing short of astounding. The cut-scenes use a form of 3D modeling that is unparalleled in computer game history, matching the quality of the film nearly perfectly. Likewise, the speaking cast handle their roles brilliantly Fans of the film will remember the everpresent rain and fire that acted as a backdrop to the drama—this feel has been duplicated for the game. Topping it all off is the powerful Vangelis score, which complements the game as strongly as it did the film.

The real-time element adds an unusual degree of strategy to an adventure game. As in Broderbunds THE LAST EXPRESS, characters don't stand around forever in one place,

so timing is often of critical value. This is particularly true of Lucy, who must be encountered at a certain point in the game in order to emerge successfully 'Narwall frequently walk into hie-or-death situations, and the only way to survive is through skin-of-your-teeth timing. The replicants in the game are more savage than those in the film and serve as deadly proof of how important it is to save your game often. They frequently

PAPPEAL: Fans of the film, adventure gamers tooking for something different.

PPROS: Compelling story, sound, and graphics; faithful to the spirit of the film.

PCONS: Excess violence: in-

game characters are small and low-res, especially compared to the cutscenes.

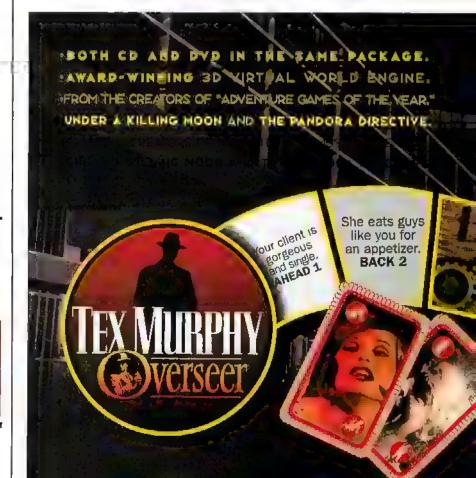




GET A CLUE You can store at of your visual and audio clues in the Knowledge Integration Assistant, an easy-to-use device that saves you from taking copious notes.

appear out of nowhere and take McCoy's life without warning,

It is this element of action and timing not any puzzles — that makes BrADE. RUNNER truly challenging. For this reason, and for the incredible re-creation of the mood and atmosphere of the 1982 film, newcomers and experienced adventurers alike will find the game a compelling and unique experience. §





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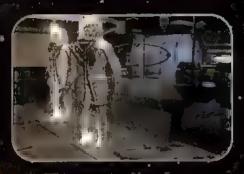
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-PC Gamer













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Broken Record

The Adventure Is Decent, But This MIRROR Still Needs Polish

by Thierry Nguyen

ome people really should stay at home. Take George Stobbart, for example Much like the Griswolds of National Lampoon fame. George gets mixed up in maybem whenever he goes on vacation, especially in France, While the Criswolds were wise enough to go to France only once, George makes the mistake of returning, resulting in two adventure games: CIRCLE OF BLOOD, which centered on the Knights Templar, and now BROKEN SWORD: THE SMOKING MIRROR, which involves a ticked-off Mayan god of Death.

THE SMOKING MIRROR takes place sometime after the events in CIRCLE OF BLOOD. Having spent time back in the United States, George travels again to France to see Nico. As the game begins, George is trapped in a burning house,

tied to a chair, and a spider is advancing toward his leg.
Nico, meanwhile, has been kidnapped by Central
American thugs.
George frees himself and embarks on another worldwide adventure, this time involving
Mayon folklore, a
major drug cartel,

and the imminent apoenlypse, Heavy stuff for our vacationing hero.



A CLOCKWORK GOLD This puzzle near the endgame was one of the more tedious ones, as it involves lots of spinning and pushing

Price: \$49.95
System
Requirements:
Pentium 60 or better
Windows 95 16MB
RAM, 40MB hard drive
space, 2x CD-ROM
Win 95-compatible
sound and video
cards
30 Support: None

30 Support: None
Multiplayer Support:
None
Designer:
Revolution Software
Publisher:
Virgin Interactive
Irvine, CA

(800) 874-4607 or

(619) 549-0222 www.vie.com

SWORD PLAY

The gameplay in SMOKING MIRROR is identical to that in CIRCLE OF BLOOD and is your standard adventure game fare: running around the world for claes, solving puzzles, and talking to people But the interface has been streamlined so that right-clicking is for looking and left-clicking is for using items or talking

The designers have also enhanced the graphics engine. The character amma-

tions and backgrounds are still extremely welf done, but now multiple layers have been added, which belp to improve the look and feel of the game. Other improvements include shadows and translucency, all which can be adjusted in order

to compensate for slower machines.

Finally, you'll play both George and Nico this time around, though the emphasis is still on George Much like Gabriel, Knichtell II. The Beast Within and some of the LEISURE SULT LARRY games, you switch between characters at specific points. The split isn't equal, as it

seems that Nico's portions are shorter than George's.

BROKEN PLOT

The main flaws in the game lie in the story and the dialogue, which didn't engross me as much as the original did CIRCLE OF BLOOD featured a solid plot filled with a strong

sense of irony, as protectors became aggressors and vice versa, and you were tinsure of who was the real enemy for much of the game. Here, the enemy is mundane and clearly defined. This villain just wants power and destruction, while the Neo-Templars wanted vengeance for mustices they suffered in the past. The story here ends up being a ho-hum "Thwart the evil god to prevent the apocalypse" tale.

The dialogue in SMOKING MIRROR is too uneven to improve matters. Though there isn't as much droning on as in the



QUIET ON THE SET This unexpected scene interrupts the story, but it also shows one of the new engine effects: shadowing.

previous game, the conversations can still be boring. They are also punctuated with contedy that, while welcome at times, often feels out of place (especially with the character of The Ceneral and parts of Quaramonte).

Finally, although SMOKING MIRROR features some decent puzzles, the endgame is a letdown. There's one contrived puzzle—a mazefike affair involving levers and doors—and that's it. You walk through the door, and the cut-scene for the ending plays. No final, villainthwarting puzzle sequence, just a click, and you're done.

All in all, BROKEN SWORD: THE SMOKING MIRROR is above average, but it's not great. While the engine and the graphics have been refined, there are some minor slips in plot, dialogue, and puzzles that bring the whole experience down a bit. If you're looking for a decent traditional adventure game to take up your time, this will do. §

PAPPEAL: Fans of the first game, newble adventurers, veteran adventurers with time and money.

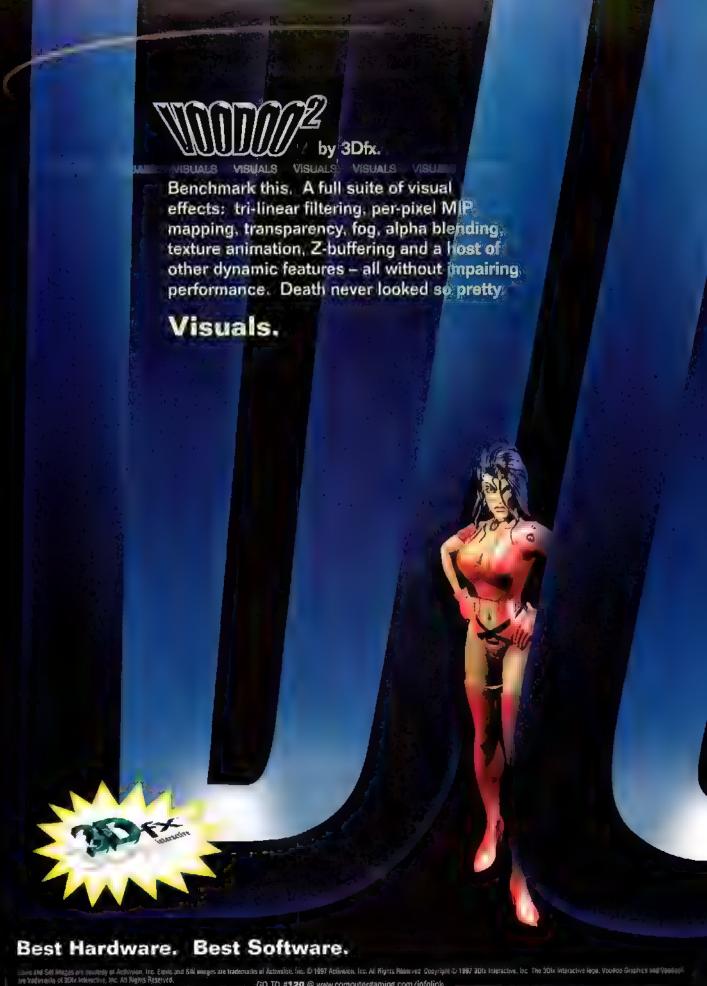
PROS: Refined engine and inter-

face; historically accurate story; less chatter.

>cons: Weak plot; uneven dialogue; poor endgame.







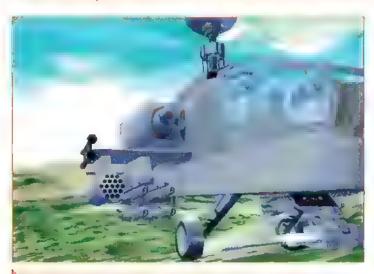
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Longbow Resurrection



This Helicopter Sim Is Even Better the Second Time Around



AH-64D LONGBOW APACHE The most capable helicopter guinship in the US inventory, the Apache is available with or without the Longbow radar system

by Robin G. Kim

he sequel to CCWs 1996
flight sim of the year retains
its predecessor's focus on
gntty realism and teethclenching combat action. It
also introduces enough
enhancements and new
gameplay options to impress
LONCBOW players and satisfy even jaded sim veterans
LONCBOW 2 offers three helicopter
models to fly. The star of the show is the

US Army's premier helicopter gunship, the AH-64D Longbow Apache, available with or without the sophisticated Longbow fire-control radar. Backing up the Apache are the OH-58D Knowa Warrior, for reconnaissance and light attack duties, and the UH-60L. Blackhawk, which specializes in troop insertions and extractions. Each handles differently, and the overall flight-model realism is excellent despite the lack of some esoteric rotary-wing aerodynamic effects. As a test of your multitasking

skills, you can hop between the pilot's sent and one crew position during flight on any of the aircraft. For the Apache and the Kiowa Warrior, the alternate station is the copilot/gunner's and copilot/observer's seat, respectively; Blackhawks have no equivalent, so you get to man the door guns instead.

CONTROL COMPLEX

Control panels and aviones systems have been modeled precisely. The AH-64D is by far the most complicated, with four MFDs (multifunction displays) and multiple radar modes, lichnet-mounted display configurations, and electro-optical sensor displays. At the other end of the spectrum lies the UH-60L, with its broad array of analog instruments. The OH-58D's moderately complex layout revolves around its raison d'être: the ballshaped Mast-Mounted Sight above its main rotor, which allows it to see over terrain without being seen, Ironically, the MMS is practically useless because its image is confined to a tmy MFD. (The intages from the Apache's nose-mounted sensor can be displayed full-screen, making target identification much easier.) This "Mr. Magoo" MMS largely undernmes the Kiowa Warnor's utility unless you use the target ID cheat key

Both flight-model and systems complexity can be toned down, but the learn-

a to sour to are, 4x Co-30M

3D Support: 3Dix 130

patch in development,

Multiplayer Support:

The ending of the continuation of the continuati

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Campaign Trail

dynamic campaign, in which the consequences of one mission carry forward into succeeding russions, theoretically guarantees unpredictability, increasing long-term play value. Longow 2 incorporates just such a system, replacing Longow's branching scripted-mission sequences.

Campaigns play out in enoughly day-long turns. Each turn.

Campaigns play out in roughly day-long turns. Each turn; the program creates a new set of missions for you, determines whether ground forces will attack or defend, and places releforcements. A number of factors affect these decisions, including occupities from the previous turn, supply levels, troce newcoments, and the success or failure of your hole copiers in their assigned missions. Occasionally, elaborate scripted missions are slipped in for added flavor.

Boardi, the campaign system succeeds admirably at prefucing missions that are logically linked to the progress of the war. Unfortunately, the turn-based structure has a negative effect on the missions. At the outset of every mission, all chappers on both sides more out simultaneously. As a result, deadly helicopter-vs.-helicopter clashes over the front lines





UH-60L BLACKHAWK A high-performance infantry squad transport heicopter, the Blackhawk is used for troop insertions and extractions.

ing curve remains relatively steep. To help you climb this curve, the sun metades a comprehensive spiralbound manual, an online encyclopedia, simulated instructor pilots. (Frame rate is slow during training, but it gets dramatically faster in actual play.)

THE REAL DEAL

LONGBOW 2 boasts perhaps the most visually and auditorily immersive combat environment of any flight sim. Spectacular graphical effects such as dynamic lighting, distance hazing, transparent smoke, and terrain filtering that eliminates pixelation (with or without a 3D card) are almost enough to make you forget that trees are still MIA. The virtual cockpit viewwhich you can pan manually or lock onto a target - models head motions with astounding realism, providing a visceral feeling of flight that is unmatched

Frame rate on a P166 is tolerable at the lowest detail settings, and the sim still looks pretty good. When you hook up a 3D card sporting a 3DFX Voodoo or Voodoo Rush chipset, the frame rate and image quality increase dramatically. Owners of non-Voodoo 3D accelerators are currently stuck with the slower, less attractive 2D mode (A Direct3D patch is in the works to support other high-end 3D chipsets.)

Sound effects and speech do just as much as graphics to draw you into the experience. During a typical mission, you might hear radio transmissions as other helo flights check in, status updates from HQ, or desperate calls for support from embattled units. Mission-specific call signs and a variety of voices help make it clear who is talking to whom. The chatter is not just atmospheric; you must often make snap decisions based on the information received. Ground troops to the south have spotted enemy armor moving toward their position. Do

you put aside your assigned task to counter this unexpected offensive? Would you arrive in time to make a difference?

In pushing the envelope of sights and sounds, some compatibility problems exist. Some

are annoyingly common. This predictable start can be exploited by rushing to the front and laying an ambusis or by biding out until the enemy helps have gone home, then ranning wild in the enemy's back-Weld. The missions are more realtatic if you play them straight, but frequent air-to-air combat is unavoidable.

and hunds-on training under the guidance of

Voodoo users see graphical glitches, and a DirectX5 quirk keeps CH joystick hats from being handled properly. A patch is planned to fix these problems.

FOUR PAIR BEATS TWO OF A KIND

In the first LONGBOW, you had just one wingman to worry about, LONGBOW 2 gives you responsibility for up to four flights of two. Each aircraft is operated by one of 16 crews in your squad, all of whom get better with experience - if they survive. Play options include instant action, custom single missions, canned single missions, and two dynamic campaigns (the first three play just like campaign missions, but without the surrounding context). One campaign hypothesizes a conflict between UN and Iranian forces in the rugged terrain of Azerbaijan, while the other simulates US Army exercises at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin Multiplayer functionality is seamlessly integrated into the game, allowing others to join in a single mission or campaign as wingmen, flight leaders, or as copilots sharing the same craft. The NTC scenario even

allows head-tohead campaign action, mixing humans and Al crews on both sides. Connections are a snap to set up and work well except for some quarks in the pilot/copilot mode.

LONGBOW Z is a textbook example of how to make a successful segrel By taking the excellent flight



KIOWA WARRIOR A scout and light attack helicopter, the OH-58D serves as the US Army's eyes on the battlefield

and systems modeling from the original and adding the features that sim fans cry out for — eye-popping graphics, multiple aircraft to fly, dynamic campaigns, and full multiplayer support—the designers have created a benchmark sim far beyond its award-winning predecessor 🕏

> **PAPPEAL!** Anyone interested in helicopter sims or realistic flight sims in general.

>PROS: Oozes realism; gorgeous graphics (especially with a Voodoo card); immersive environment; true dynamic campaigns; thorough multiplayer support; great long-term replayability.

COMS: Demanding hardware requirements; no mission recorder; compatibility problems on some PCs; dynami-

cally generated mission structure results in too much air-to-air combat: Direct3D support requires upcoming patch.





Check out the exclusive ThrustMaster programming utility for Lovesow 2 on this month's CG ROM



MISSION CONTROL The mission planner Iri Longrow 2 is exceptionally full-featured, offering thorough briefings and letting you tailor all flight plans, loadouts, and crew assignments However, its interface could be more convenient to use, and debriefs are rather terse.



Super Hornet

F/A-18 HORNET Gets a 3D Facelift

by Robin G. Kim



s the state of the art in realistic flight simulations advances, creating a competitive sim from scratch becomes increasingly expensive. Thus, it's no big surprise that F/A-18 Korra is an evolution of its predecessor, F/A-18 HORNET 3.0. But owners of the earlier

title must ask whether the added features are worth the price of a new game.





KOREA includes 28 canned singleplayer missions set in a hypothetical secand Korean War, 6 multiplayer missions flown over NAS Fallon in Nevada, and the same 6 training flights as its forerunner. All are well-designed, offening a good variety of air-to-air und air-toground action, Although missions are presempted, randomized enemy placement provides some replay potential. Later missions are rather tough to win. but various enemy Al settings can be adjusted to suit novices as well as experts. Flight times are generally short, and mission planning is nonexistent just select a loadout from the large assortment of ordnance and go-

Two wingmen accompany you on most single-player missions. You can



VOODDO MAGIC The unaccelerated polygon graphics update smoothly on lesser machines, but the tooks improve tremendously when run on a 3D card based on the 3DFX Voodoo or Voodoo Rush chipset.

issue them an array of commands for alrto-air work, but — oddly — they cannot be ordered to attack ground targets.

THAT VOODOO YOU DO

The polygon graphics engine from HORNET 3.0 is still around, offering high frame rates at resolutions from 640x480 to 1024x765 even on mid-range Pentiums (albeit at the expense of slowing game time drastically when overloaded), but KOREA now also supports 3D accelerator cards based on the 3Dfx Vnodoo and Vnodoo Rush chipsets. Farabling 3D acceleration transforms the plain polygons into some of the pretitest visuals ever seen in a flight sim — with no noticeable performance hit.

Other new features include a wellwritten manual (a godsend for those who don't want to sit through multimedia tutorials), additional cockpit views, and a pursion builder. The new views consist of 17 fixed cockpit views, which provide complete visual coverage with no unreal istic blind spots, plus a padfock view mode that allows you to track incoming missiles as well as nearby bandits. The mission builder is an impressive piece of work, allowing you to finely script the actions of both aircraft and ground vehicles through an efficient and attative interface. Custom missions can be shared, offering gamers who have internet access a potentially unlimited number of scenarios to fly

F/A-18 KOREA is clearly a more complete package than its predecessor, with long-term replay value. If you're not put off by the lack of a proper campaign, this is definitely worth a look.

Complex systems medeling, or anyone looking for a realistic sim.

PROS: Outstanding avionics modeling; gorgeous 3D-accelerated graphics; high frame rate without a 3D card; impressive mission builder.

CONS: Flight model flaws; no campalgn; inconsistencies in multiplayer combat when graphics engine gets bogged down.





Price 1 System Requirements: Pr , i ar i 11 5 10 10 B VI . .). B D)',' - 4 11 1 . P . P' in ditail 1 P V. 4 (30 Support, A. Ix Mustiplayer Support. M for re 10 m PK et I ,,,,,, FTS Called 1 PS " princh to the (2 1 stayers, 1 CD per 1 13,20 350 1 at 0 1. Cattal to G S 1 Ji. Designer: * (:1) Publisher: Gran c Sent alto 15 C 1 1 1 L. TX 1977 386 .575

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award winning
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Euro Raptor



The Creators of EF2000 Tackle the Ubiquitous F-22

by Denny Atkin



oflowing up its 1995
CGW Premier
Award—winning EF2000,
Digital Image Design is
back with a simulation of
another high-tech fighter,
the F-22 Raptor. As the
fifth F-22 sum to come
out in the past year, F-22
Air DOMINANCE

FIGHTER (ADF) has a lot to prove in a crowded market. But with its detailed simulation of the F-22's 21st century cockpit, a host of engaging missions, and a maque AWACS mode, it's a standout

UNDER THE CANOPY

EF2000 fans who hup into the cockpit of D1D's F-ZZ will find familiar territory. The high-teeli, multifunction display—based cockpit has been updated to reflect the F-ZZs highly automated systems. The virtual cockpit, excellent view pudlock, and full-screen MFD views are all tweaked versions of those in FT 2000.



SAFE AT HOME Even if you suffer major systems damage, you may be able to slide to a safe belly landing.

If you compare ADF's cockpit to Lockheed promotional literature and articles in Aviation Week, it's evident that its simulation of the real F-22's systents is more anthentic than any other sun. Offensive, defensive, situational, and systems MFDs are thoroughly modeled, as are the F-22s radar, infrared search and track, and LANTIRN systerus. (The latter aren't fitted to the real pare-fighter 1'-22, but likely will be if the plane is used in air-to-ground role.) To succeed at many missions, you'll need to learn how to set the FMCON (EMission CONditions), which control how stealthfly the plane's systems are

While the systems modeling is topnotch, the flight model is missing a few bells and whistles. The real F-22 bas automatic 2D thrust-vectoring (this points engine thrust up and down to allow you to pull the plane's nose to seemingly impossible angles), but ADF forces you to engage vectoring by holding down the Tilde key (~). This makes the plane's response more predictable, but I'd welcome an automatic mode in any updates. Also, the fly-by-wire systems in the F-22 actually change the afteraft's responsiveness. to control input depending on your sitnation; for instance, it tames handling during landing. While NovaLogie's

> F-22 RAPTOR models this feature, it's absent in ADF

These are the only noticeable omasions in the aircraft modeling. Speed bleed in turns, performance changes at altitude, and the capabilities of various aircraft types all seem right on. Plight models are noticeably more detailed than those in 142000.

CAN O' MISSIONS

ADIF sports four types of missions. Instant Action, your basic "shoot everything" quick combat,



Price: \$ 19.95 System Requirements: Pentium 133 16MB RAM 70MB hard-drive snace, 2x CD ROM SVGA video card capable of 800x600x16 bit color, sound card, mouse 3D Support: 3Dfx Direct3D Multiplayer: Modem direct cable, LAN (2-8) players) Internet TCP/IP (2 8 players), CD not reduired Designer: Dig tal Image Des qu

Publisher: Ocean of



GROUND POUNDER The F-22s here are equipped for mud-moving missions, like the F-15, the plane will probably eventually be tasked for ground strikes.

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Simulator, single stand-alone missions; Tours of Duty, linked, scripted missions that form campaigns; and Multiplayer missions. The dynamic campaign found in EF2000 is AWOL (see the "Total Air War" sidebar for further details)

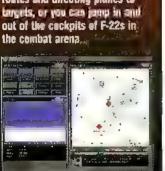
Most of the Simulator missions focus on training. They cover not only basic flight, but also weapons tactics, using the I*-22s stealth and proper utilization of wingmen. This is also where you'll find the AWACs missions.

In the Tour of Duty section you'll find three campaigns. While EF2000 had a dynamic campaign that generated missions based on the outcome of previous combat, the missions here are prescripted. On the plus side, these carefully crafted missions are generally more interesting than the dynamic campaign missions in EF2000, which quickly grew repetitive. On the downside, once you've worked through the training missions and the 30 Tour of Duty missions, all you can do is repeat your experiences until the campaign discs become available.

The missions themselves pose a number of interesting challenges — you'll need to use your smarts, not just brute force, to win many of them. Mission

Commanu and Control

store, ADF includes a manhor of AWACS miscience, which will give you a taste of the appropriately TAW expansion pack. Simulating a workstation in an ill. 3 Airborne Warning And Central System, the AWACS missions for you specify air and ground targets for allied functions. You can play an entire mission in real-time strategy mode, specifying routes and directing planes to targets, or you can joung in and out of the cockpits of F-22s in the combat arena.



Total Air War

DF doesn't have an EF2808-style dynamic campaign, but that shortcoming will be corrected this summer with the release of the Town Am Wan expansion pack. Digital image Besign has been working with U.S. air-campaign planners from Desert Storm and visiting various other air forces to ensure that the TAW campaign simulates actual battle destrine with unprecedented accuracy. TAW's mission planne will let you after dynamic campaign missions or create outsion missions for the Simulator and Taur of Duty madeles. You'll also be able to match the missions for the situation of the missions and the missions of the missions are always should be planned into the action in the cockelt of an In-IC.

goals usually involve protecting or destroying a particular aircraft or ground target, then returning alive to your departure air base. This can be annoying, because while the AWACS will happily point you to a divert air base if your plane is heavily damaged, landing anywhere other than the preprogrammed base will result in mission failure.

ADF includes nine multiplayers missions, with different wenther conditions, battle locales, and aircraft armament. They range from guns-only deathmatches to multiple team missions in which the object is to defend your air base while taking out the enemys. Up to eight players can participate, but as of this writing there was no online server along the lines of F-22 RATTOR's NovaWorld.

CANDID CAMERA

Ever have a mission end suddenly without ever seeing the guy who blew you to pieces? With ADF's AIr Combat Manenvering Instrumentation (ACMI) module, you can record and replay both suigle- and multiplayer missions. The replay doesn't use the game's 3D engine, but rather a military-style wireframe display. Although it's been visually spruced up, it looks very similar to the ACMI displays I saw at 'Ijindall AFB when I visited for my F-15 familiarization flight in 1994.

The graphics and sound in ADF are top-notch. With the game supporting both 3Dfx Glide and Direct 3D (with enhanced texture support for AGP chips like the Intel 740), the graphics in general took superb. There is a bit of pixelation in city areas, and visible scans where some terrain tiles intersect, but these glitches are overshadowed by the lovely desert and rolling hill textures and the transparent fog and cloud effects. Frame rate was good on a P166 running in 2D mode, and silky-smooth on the same system running under Glide with a Pure 3D card.



SPLASH ONE Don't fly through the debris after you shoot down an enemy or you may suffer damage.

Sound is very good, with wonderful stereo effects

Along with a good manual and thorough online documentation, the package includes Allies and Adversaries, a wonderful book from the editors of World Air Power Journal, giving background on all the planes in the sim Aviation buffs will love this reference, which could easily sell for \$20 itself.

ADF Isn't without its quirks and omissions. You can't choose your plane's load-out before a mission, you occasionally see objects through hills, and the lack of a mission builder means play will eventually grow repetitive. Still, this is one of the most addictive jet sims I've played in a long time, and by the time it starts to get stale, the TOTALAIR WAR add-on should be around to rejuvenate it.

APPEAL: Anyone who enjoys authentic modern jet-fighter simulations; EF2000 fans looking for a sim with a similar flavor.

PROS: Good flight modeling; engaging missions; detailed aircraft systems; innovative AWACS mode.

PCONS: Canned missions combined with the lack of a mission editor limit replay value; thrust vectoring not handled authentically.





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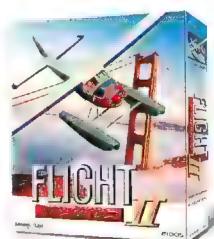


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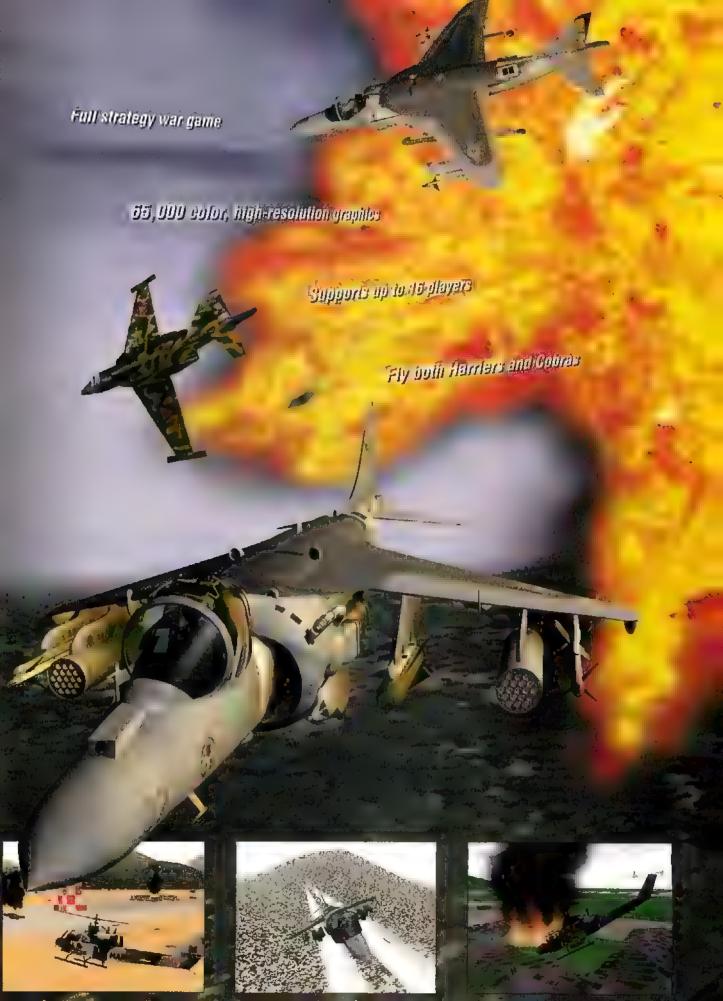


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Getting Serious

NovaLogic's Second F-22 Sim Gets More Serious, But Still Emphasizes Action

by Denny Atkin

pparently stinging from enticism that last year's F-22
LICHTINING If was a bit light in the realism department,
Novat ogle teamed with Lockheed-Martin (the company that's building the real

F-22) to develop a more authentic simulated aircraft. The resulting product, F-22 RAPTOR, sports an interesting combination of realistic plane performance in a decidedly action-oriented environment.



RAPTOR DOWN An F-22 Raptor meets the business end of a Sidewinder missile in a game on NovaLogic's NovaWorld server.

AIRPLANE BY LOCKHEED

The game box has Lockheed-Martin and NovaLogic logos on it—and that's not just the result of a licensing agreement. Test pilots for the YP-22 and F-22 development programs consulted with NovaLogic on the sim's flight model, and RAPTOR shows clear signs of the expert input.

NovaLogic's first sinchad a very lightweight flight model, with odd takeoff hehavior, rudders that would allow flat turns at supersonic speeds, and too much energy retention in maneuvers. Here you'll find dramatic amprovements: Takeoffs feel right, rudders are toried down, and heavy maneuvering takes its

down, and heavy maneuvering takes its

LOCK AND FIRE F-22 LIGHTNING II vets will like the new EF2000-style padlock view for tracking enemy planes.

toll on your airspeed. Roll rates vary with altitude and airspeed. And as with the real F-22, the jets fly-by-wire handling is tarned when you drop the landing gear

The F-22's advanced offensive and defensive instrument displays are modeled here as well, but that makes little difference in actual gameplay. Although you can glance down and view any of the instruments on the panel, the pop-up radar display and HUD give you nearly all the information you need - look down only to check system damage. While the HUD and displays match up well with publicly available F-22 information, the systems aren't modeled with the level of detail you'll find in F-22 Air. DOMINANCE FIGHTER OF 1F-22. For instance, the real F-22's radar's emissions are tunable depending on the combat situation and importance of stealth; this has only on and off settings.

CAMPAIGN BY HOLLYWOOD

While the arcraft modeling sets new standards for NovaLogic, the campaign

is just an incremental upgrade. Although the box and documentation refer to "dynamic campaigns," in fact, the missions are prescripted. If you fail a mission, you must fly it again, and you'll see the exact same sequence of events on your next attempt.

What is new is that targets you take out in one mission stay destroyed throughout the campaign. So if you use a leftover IDAM bomb to take out a factory that was to be a target in a later mission, you'll find yourself with a different target later on. Similarly, taking out lots of extra fighters on early missions should help keep you from facing overwhelming odds later on. While this does make for a more interesting campaign than one with no variance on replay, it's far from what's considered "dynamic" in the simindustry. Many players will be content. with the mission structure that is there, but shame on NovaLogic for misrepresenting it in attempt to drag in gamers looking for a true dynamic campaign.

To move on to the next mission, you



Price: \$44.95 System Regulrements: Pentium 133 (P200 recom mended), Windows 95 IGMB RAM (32MB recommended), SVGA graphics, 4x CD-ROM mouse. sound eard loystick recpmmended 3D Support: None Multiplayer Support: Modern direct secal TAN (2-16 players, 1 CD per player), Internet (2-16 players, 1 CD per player) NovaWorld (2-128 players 1 GD per player) Designer: Randy Casey Publisher: Novacopic Calabasas CA (818) 880-1997 www.novalogic.com must accomplish all the primary mission goals. These vary, and include destroying particular flights of enemy aircraft, taking out a certain ground target, or ensuring the survival of an escorted flight. On one mission, an enemy flight that was a primary goal never showed up—even when I replayed the mission—and I was forced to restart the campaign. (Thankfully, it was only the third mission.)

The five campaigns have a Holly-wood feel, evident from the very first mission, when your wingman goads you to disobey a "return to base" order and take out another flight of enemy aircraft Exerting, but hardly authentic. Wingman Al and control is much better here than in the previous game —your wingies are now a valuable resource for taking out enemy targets. Enemy Al is improved as well, with gunlights fairly challenging.

NOT IN THE CARDS

F-22 RAPTOR's graphics engine looks great on a 2D card. Enhancements over the original include better lighting, more detailed aircraft (including the best-looking Raptor model of the five F-22 sims), and software filtering to eliminate blockiness at low altitudes. There are many nice eye-candy details, such as flights of Harriers doing VTOL launches to your side as you barrel down the runway.

A variety of terrain areas, times of day, and weather conditions keep things visually interesting in the sim. As with F-22 LIGITINING II, the terrains are a bit exaggerated, with 10,000-foot mountains popping up everywhere to give a sense of speed and provide good terrain masking in dogfights.

On a P166 or better, you should see

Online Fracas

-22 RAPTOR supports birectiffsy multiplayer games over median, unlime modern cable, LAN, or internet. But in addition to allowing you to most up to 16 players on your own PC. Hovalogic has gone a step further with the NovaWorld entire matchmaking service. This allows you to join games with more than 100 other finator pilots via the internet.

At launch, HevaWorld supported two game types: a simple deathmetch mode and the more intriguing Raptor Air War (RAW). In the latter game, you join one of two teams and attempt to destroy the enemy team's air base. Each player can choose to be a fighter, armed with gune and Sidewinders, or a hember, with enly the gun and JDAM hombs. Mevalogic's programmers clid a supera job with the multiplayer code—even in genes with more than 30 players, there was no perceptible log in close-in combat.

There is room for improvement, however. You get assigned to whichever team has fewer members when you join a NovaWorld RAW game, making it tough to set up group versus group combate, and often putting you on the same team as your fermer enemies, should you leave and reenter the game. Also, flying ratior-cold only seems to affect detection by SAM situs, making sneak attacks on the enemy difficult.

Still, it's a blast, and play in free at the moment (flevalopic makes (ineprint references to it being free during its beta period, implying that a charge may be instituted at some future date). Nevalogic premises to enhance the multiplayer functionality with autometic updates, with nun-

ning scores, squadron play, and ladders comingsoon.

fanly smooth frame rates; playing on a P133 I found things particularly choppy Look for a noticeable speed boost on MMX PCs, but don't count on your 3D card being any help, RAPTOR doesn't support 3D hardware. This isn't a big issue on P166MMX or

faster machines, but owners of slower PCs equipped with 3D hardware will yearn for 3D support

Sound has been done very needy here, with Dolby stereo support and a

very wide variety of digitized in-flight communications, which were recorded by Marine pilots.

While the actionoriented, marginally variable campaign may frustrate some of the more hard-core pilots, the flashy missions keep the simulator interesting for the more casual gamer. This is not an intimidating game, and the realistic flight-model

This is the genter arms to local the state of the state o

means beginners who move on to more hard-core sims won't have to unlearn any bad habits. Quarks aside, F-22 RAPTOR is interesting and action-packed, and should provide plenty of enjoyment and fun for the sim pilot.

▶ APPEAL: Flight-sim fans who want realistic aircraft performance but don't mind a little Top Gun in the storyline.

>PROS: Top-notch flight modeling; some of the best 2D-card graphics around; superh support for multiplayer internet play.

▶COM5: No 3D-card support;

campaign mode isn't really dynamic as claimed, which forces you to fly unsuccessful missions again.





BEAUTIFUL BIRD Despite the sim's lack of 3D support, the Raptor here is the best looking of any F-22 sim.









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Jammed Gears

Activision's Giant Robots Have Fallen, and They Can't Get Up

by Greg Fortune



ctivisions MECHWARROR games have long been regarded as the best entries in the "grant robot simulation" subgenre. And unfortunately, despite high hopes, it appears that the company's HEAM CEAR won't be stealing any of the thunder from the

MECHWARRUCK series. Somehow, I get the feeling that the HEAVY CEAR design team must be as upset about this as we are, because it's obvious that this game could have been another lag hit with a couple of months more work. As it stands, the game feels more like a beta than a finished product and is woefully incomplete in many areas.

INSTANT ANNOYANCE

The first thing I wanted to do after getting the game booted up was jump

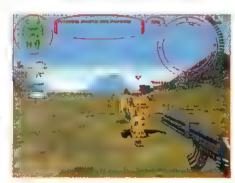
into no Instant Action scenario and get a feel for the Al and engine. I checked the main menu, and figuring that I was just being blind, proceeded to check the manual. Sure enough, there is no Instant Action mode! MECRWARROR 2: MERCENARIES remains on thy bard drive after all this time because I can jump into a random mission with random enemies and mixit up. After you've finished the campaigns in HEWY GEAR, you've got

them again or go find a lag-laden online game. The decision not to include a mission editor or random mission generator is a senous blow to the replay value of this product.

After configuring my control setup, I went to adjust the graphics and see how

the game engine looked, I changed to the software-only mode, and I have this recommendation: If you do not own a 3D accelerator card, don't buy this game. The software 640x480 mode is not pretty. and it has a terrible frame rate. The textures look pretty bad, and if you turn them off. enemy Gears can be nearly invisible The game won't even look as good as MECHWARROR 2. As bad as this sounds, it's a masterpiece compared to 320x200, the

recommended made for Pentram 150 or slower machines. There, I can't even read the names of the weapons in the HUD, and the other Cears just look like strange blobs. In fact, I once mistook a rock for a gear in this mode and emptied several rounds of ammo into it before



PRETTY, JERKY Running this level of detail without 3D acceleration results in jerky frame rates and heavily dithered textures.



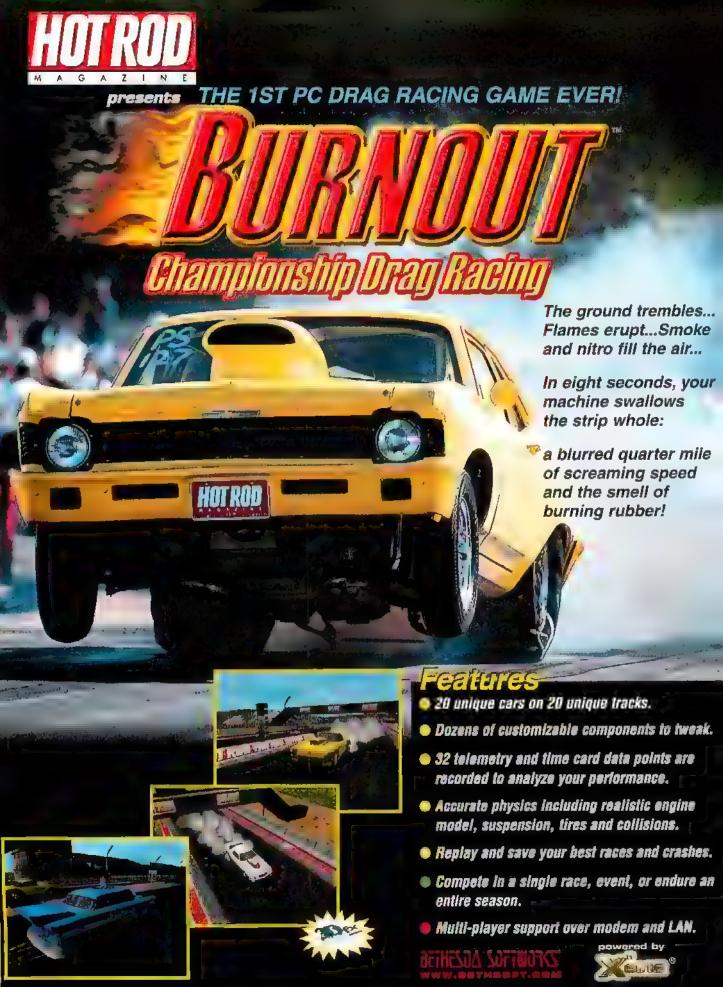
DETAIL ORIENTED The graphics look fantastic on 3D card-equipped systems, but they slow down when the shooting starts.



Price: \$49 95 **System Requirements:** Pentium 90 (320x200, no textures, P166 minimum for 640x480), Windows 95 16MB RAM (24MB for multiplayer); SVGA graphics. 4x CD-ROM sound card mouse 3D Support: 3Dfx Rendition, Direct30 Multiplayer Support: Modem, direct cable, LAN (2-8 players), Internet (2-8 players); 1 CD per player. Original Design: Dream Pod 9 Designer: Dustin Browder Publisher: Activision Santa Monica, CA (310) 255 2000

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two choices. Play





REVIEW • HEAVY GEAR

closing to point blank range and seeing (sort of) the rock for what it was.

I quickly moved on to the 3D modes, checking the 3Dfx mode first. HEAVY GEAR looks considerably better with a 3D card, but there were several really obvious problems. The textures just don't look quite right Other problems aren't quite so subtle, such as the dust from your wheels as you roll across dry land. In an age where many 3D sims have wispy, semitranslucent smoke and clouds, the dust here appears in the form of big square black pixels rising from the ground, as does smoke from another damaged gear.

To top things off, while the frame rate can be quite smooth when you're traversing terrain, the action gets jumpy and starts stuttering as soon as other Gears appear on the battlefield and start firing. The frame-rate problems make control difficult enough that I end up playing the game in low light (wire frame) mode, as the textures and visual effects aren't worth the hit to playability. My guess is that the designers didn't have time to optimize the graphic effects and performance, because I can't imagine anyone designing them that way intentionally



MESHING GEARS The drag-and-drop interface for customizing your Gear is a welcome improvement from the MechWarrion series.

IN THE COCKPIT

The Gear design section is well done, with dragand-drop components and a simple interface. The
Gear components can be customized as well, allowing you to decide on details, such as whether to use
light or standard actuators in the knees of your gear.
You drop weapons into place by dragging them to an
available mounting point. I was surprised that you
can't hold a second rifle in the left hand, which is
reserved for grenade use only. A second autocamion
an that hand would have been much more useful
than those grenades ever were.

There are two mission types available: Story and Tour of Duty. Story is a sempted campaign mode with a predetermined story line. Here, you're an elite pilot for the Northern Guard. If you want a little more control over your destiny, you can choose the Tour of Duty, which allows you to pick your allegiance and

STAR COMMAND



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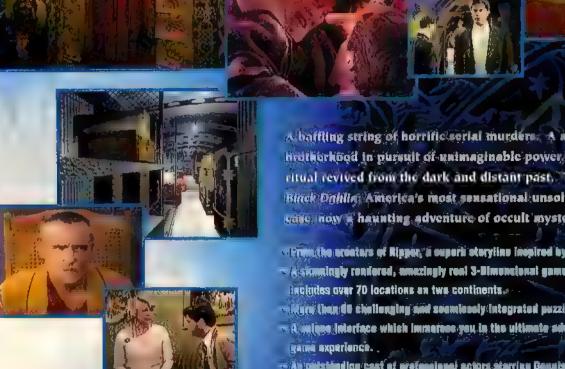
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- Mary than 46 challenging and scampooly integrated puzzies.
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- An contained by cost of professional actors starring Bounts Hopper, Total Barr and Darren Elikor





Sharing the Pain

he same problems that plague the single player game make the multiplayer aspects; eg-challenging as well. There are a wealth of connection options, and the development team has admirably supported multiplayer campaigns instead of simpler deathmatch options. Unfortunately, the performance and graphics grablems are compounded by the additional processing time needed to stay connected and in sync. (Activision's Heavy Gean FAQ on its Web site; admits that the multiplayer features are still at the beta level.) While Internet play supports up to eight players, you'll be limited to four if any players are using modems rather than T1 lines. Most of the comments I've heard about multiplayer Heavy Gear have been negative, and my own experiences have been under wholming as well. Many players who play regularly say it is funonly if you tolorate the engine problems. Some games are saved by their multiplayer value, but here the single-player problems hamper multiplayer as well.

your battles. Your victories in this mode actually influence the course of the battle, and you'll see the front lines move back and forth, depending on how well you do. Your supplies, reinforcements, and mission types also depend on your skill in the Gears. There are a variety of mission types and

objectives, but they don't feel very different from one another.

The AI is very good, but inconsistent. There are times when the enemy will hide behind rocks and duck behind cover. There are also bries when an enemy Gear will stand there and take fire for several seconds before reacting to it. The biggest problem is that with five or six Gears on the field the frame rate drops a lot, and you can almost hear anything less than a Pentium II scream in pain when this happens.

MECH IT STOP!

The most disappointing thing about this game is that you see lots of parts of the game that really do show care and creativity. I don't know what caused Activision to stop the team short of completion, but whatever the reason, it



SIDE SHOOTER With articulated guns and hips, why do many shots have to veer off to the side upon exiting the gun barrel?

robbed them of producing a hit and us of getting a great game. HEAVY CEAR just doesn't look like a finished product I'd love to see a fully cooked version of this game, because parts of it show great potential. But as it stands, it's still a bit too chewy to enjoy.

>APPEAL: Die-hard glant robot game fans who really, really need a new fix.

PROS: Nicely done dynamic campalgn; good gear design lab; some original gameplay.

PCOMS: Game engine slows easily; visually looks unfinished; unacceptable frame rate; inconsistent artificial intelligence.







AWACS Mission Control



Full Virtual Cockpit



ACMI Mode



FIGHT S

	AWACS Simulation	ACM)	Realistic Stealth Mode	Scaleable 3D Map	FREE Reference Guide
F22 ADF - DID	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
iF22 - iMagic	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
F22 Raptor - NovaLogic	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
JFIII - Eidos	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO



Extensive Training Missions



Network Play



High Resolution Terrain



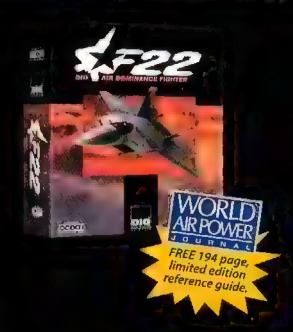
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Interactive Magic's Complex Game of Strategy Will Reward You With Deep Gameplay

by Elliott Chin



ith so many good games to choose from, real-time gamers are in beaven these days.

DARK REICA,

MYTH, ACE OF EMPIRES, TOTAL

ANSIBLATION—
These are the cream

of the crop, and STARCIMFT and POPULOUS are just around the corner. There are other lesser-known RTS games, though, that are worthy of gamers' attention: Diamonds in the rough, so to speak, that will reward the patient gamer. Interactive Magic's SEMEN KINCHOMS, developed by Trevor Chan and Enlight Studios, is such a game. Like Chan's CAPITALISM, SEMEN KINCHOMS is deep, complex, and challenging. While it also shares CAPITALISM's steep learning curve, it goes beyond Chan's first effort by being more fun and personable.

HISTORY 101

Unlike the raft of sci-fi real-time games, SEMEN KINGDOMS is a semi-historical strategy game in a vein samilar to AGE OF EMPIRES. You can control one of seven different cultures — Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Mayan, Norman, Norse, or Persian — in an open-ended attempt to grow your empire by witning over independent villages and dominaling your neighbors. You start out as a small village of your initial nationality, but can assimilate other cultures by conquest or by persuasion.

When you first boot up SEVEN KINGDOMS, you'll see that there is no campaign game and no scenario editor, both staples of real-time strategy games. Story-driven campaigns give us a variety of linked challenges, allow us to feel a sense of accomplishment after each scenario, and provide an impetus to keep playing the game. SEVEN KINGDOMS' lack of a campaign shortchanges gamers

on gameplay. The same can be said for its tack of a scenario editor.

What you do get is a game similar to CIVILIZATION, You start out as one puny town and then attempt to create a vast empire. If you grow so large that you can crush your rivals and eliminate all other kingdoms, you win the game. That's it In many other strategy games, including AGE OF EMPIRES, this wouldn't offer nearly enough gameplay. However, SEMEN KINGDOMS gets away with it (barely) because of its incredible depth and complexity. It also does not emphasize combat. Many other realtime games, because they are all about building up troops and smashing the enemy, would be terrible as openended single-scenario games. But in SEVEN KINCHOMS, there is so much to do that an open-ended game could last for hours.

Even despite the wealth of game options (such as world sizes, victory con-

ditions, and random events), which serve to increase the replayability of SEVEN KINCHOMS, the lack of a campaign is a disappointment

However, in addition to the single scenario game, there is multiplayer support, a tistonal, and segnanos. The scenanos liven up the package by providing your missions with specific conditions and goals, time limits, and varying difficulty levels. The tutorial is good, and completely necessary for a game with this level of complexity. It walks you through combat, trade, mining and manufacturing, and espionage. The tutorial also covers the assimilation of independent villages, the



Price: \$49.95 System Requirements: Pentium 90, Windows 95 16MB RAM, 45MB hard-drive space, SVGA graphics, 4x CD-ROM drive, 100 percent Sound-Blaster-compatible sound card 3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: Null modern, modern (2) players), LAN, Internet (2-7 players); 1 CD per every 4 players Designer: Trevor Chan and Enlight Studios Publisher: Interactive Magic Research Triangle Park, NC (919) 461-0722



IN TOO DEEP SEVEN KINGDOMS Is a complex strategy game. You'll need to pay close attention to diplomacy, espionage, economy, and population management

www.imaglegames.com

taking on of foreign kingdoms, and the tackling of the monster lairs in various locations around the map.

SO HOW DEEP IS IT?

Unlike many other real-time games, you don't create units. You start with one town and a population. People are your most valuable resource in this game, but you don't directly increase their numbers. Instead, you indirectly increase population by carefully managing your empire and building a robust standard of living.

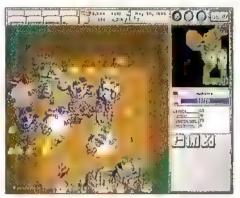
You can recruit common workers and soldiers or train specialists from your town's population. Specialists are important for the six aspects of empire management in the game: construction, leadership, mining, manufacturing, research, and esplonage.

With construction workers, you build mines to extract resources, factories to turn the raw materials into finished goods, markets to sell either raw or finished goods, forts to house and train troops, towers of science to research weapons, and war factories to build stege weapons. The factories, mines, and towers require workers to operate. If you build these buildings close to a village, then villagers will automatically move into the buildings to work. If you build the structures far from towns, then you need to settle a new village near your work sites.

Economics is a little more complicated. As with the rest of the game, it relies on some serious interdependencies. In



CAPITALISM REDUX The economic model is very robust in Sevent Kingooms. You'll need to mine raw materials, refine them, and sell the finished goods to domestic and foreign markets.



ITS NOT ALL ABOUT ARMS Combat is necessary for eventual subjugation of enemy kingdoms, but you need to weaken your enemies first through effective use of diplomacy and espionage

order to get money, which is necessary for all your empire's needs, you need to mane raw materials. You can self these raw materials at markets or refine them in factories to make finished products. These products can also be sold for cash. You can self either of these goods in foreign fands, but you must build your own market finked to foreign towns. However, as with all aspects of this game, there are additional considerations. To get these raw or finished goods to foreign markets (or to move raw materials between unlinked mines and factories or markets), you need to build caravans.

Yes, it's complex, but the bad news is, this is only a simplified overview. However, I like the economic model it's much deeper than the abstracted economics of ACF and CIV.

Espionage is equally sophisticated, and is much better realized here than in many other strategy games. You can train spies to infiltrate enemy cities to check up on your rivals or conduct occasional assassinations and city subversions. You can even worm your spies into enemy confidence, if they happen to be promoted to general status, you could even take control of enemy cities and armies

I was also impressed by the game's diplomacy. All kingdoms have a reputation score, which is affected by their deeds versus their citizens and other kingdoms. The diplomacy options are very robust. You can enter into trade, friendly, or alliance treaties; declare war on enemy kingdoms; demand or pay tribute, and unify disparate states by pur chasing a rival king's crown. The best

thing about this diplomacy model is that it works. The AI doesn't reject treatics out of hand. They will even take the initiative to ally with you or to open trade dialogue

IT DOESN'T STOP

There are even more aspects of the gameplay to digest. For one, getting undependent villages to join you is dependent upon their nationality, your king's nationality, your reputation, and the standard of living you promise them (measured by the goods you can

sell them at market). Obviously, people are more likely to Join rulers who are like themselves. However, you can force villages into submission through strength of arms or grants of money. Once you gain a village's loyalty, though, you'll have to keep it by giving yet more grants and ensuring that the villagers are employed and happy.

There is even a fantasy aspect to the game, as monster laws dot the land-scape. If you can defeat the enemies within, you gain treasure and scrolls of power. There are seven scrolls, one for each nationality, which are used to build Scats of Power. By getting each nationality to pray at its Scat of Power, you can summon that nationality's god—a superpowerful unit that can confer some impressive bonuses on your kingdom.

You'll stumble several times before you can learn to walk in this game. You could also learn a thing or two from the Al. It is fairly smart, and quite clever with its use of spies. However, I did notice that early in the game it proved susceptible to "grunt rushes."

FALL OF THE EMPIRE

While SEVEN KINGDOMS is wonderfully deep, it does suffer some minor problems. The biggest of those is its interface. Although you can get brief help after you hold your cursor over an item for several seconds, the icons and information setup aren't intuitive (many icons look alike, and some don't exactly illustrate the command). I'm a big fan of instant text explanation, such as what



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you see in ACH OF EAFIRES or WARCRAFT II. Move your cursor over the barracks reon, and you'll see a line of text at the bottom information bar that says "Barracks." That's all I ask for just a little one- or two-world description of what I'm clicking on.

The complexity of the game, combined with the cumbersome interface, also makes this game seem very



DIFFERENT STROKES The fact that each nationality has its own look is a great touch. Each civilization even speaks a little in its native tongue. imwieldy at times. White careful study of the manual and tutorial will minimize this feeling, some aspects of the game—such as the nuances of caravans that move from mine to factory to foreign market—can take several games to learn. I don't think difficulty is a bad thing for strategy games, but SEVEN KINCDOMS has a steeper learning curve than many 4x turnbased games.

My other gripes with the game come during gameplay. Because units tend to bunch up when attacking, it's hard to select individual units from a mob. It also bothered me that there was no easy way to tell which ruler owned a certain village. Many times, I'd accept a trade treaty with a foreign ruler and then be unable to find his city. I could clearly see a city's name, but not its ruler (colors did help, but including ruler initials would have been better)

I also would have liked the game more if there were greater unit variety. A cavalry unit would have added more tactical depth to SEVEN KINGDOMS,

especially since you eventually will engage in combat.

Although I've tried to capture SEVEN KINCDOMS as best I could in this review, I've only scratched the surface of the game. I haven't seen at game this complex in a long time. That's a good thing, especially when you consider that this is a real-time game. SEVEN KINCDOMS sai't for everyone, but if you enjoy deep strategy, I recommend you boot this game up yourself, and see just how much it has to offer. §

PAPPEAL: Strategy gamers looking for a deep, sophisticated real-time game.

▶ PROS: Excellent tutorial; lots of depth; plenty to do; cool fantasy and multicultural aspects.

campaign play; lack of a scenario editor; unintuitive interface; game is too short.





GunJam: bandits, 6 o'clock high!

HiTech: i'm done -- bingo ammo

GunJam: run low -- i'll cover you home

HiToch: regar that - p51 closing fast:

GunJam: pull left! PULL LEFT!

GunJam: HiTech!?!

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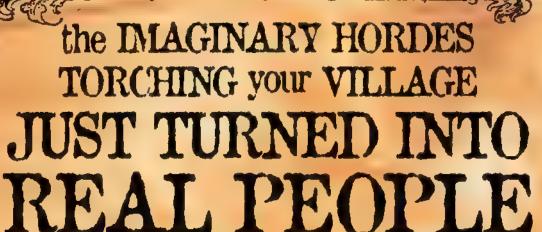
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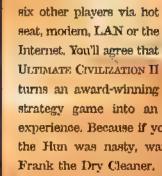


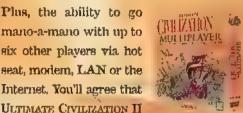


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Living & Dying In 40K Time



Finally, a Real Warhammer for the Computer

by Tim Carter

mid the avalanche of realtime clones that seem to have buried the factical computer strategy game market, it's good to see a product that returns to where the genre began namely, computerized versions of traditional games that are, by definition, turn-

based Warriammer Epic 40,000 Final LIBERATION is the latest computer version of the classic tableton miniatures game. As such, it enters the market with a lengthy background and history that newcomers may find somewhat infimidating. After all, if you're playing a WWII factical game, the odds are that you already know what a Tiger tank is and you have some idea of how to use it against those pesky Shermans, But when you're first confronted with a horde of

Ork Boyz, you may have to step back for a moment, reassure yourself that you haven't purchased a rap opera of The Lord of the Rings, and then delve into WARITAMMER's online encyclopedia to sort thangs out.

ORK BOYZ IN DA HOOD

If you're a dyed-m-the-wool Warhammer fan, you'll be in heaven from the start. If you're new, don't despair; WARRAMMER 40K sports an easy-to-learn tactical interface WARI DAMMER is essentially a factical wargame, in which you control platoous and squads à la STEEL PAYDIERS, albeit in a futuristic sci-fi environment. While you can create random "quick battles," the meat of the game lies in a sequential campaign of scenarios controlled through a strategie map. Between battles, you may decide where to attack

next, or, at higher levels of difficulty, respond to enemy counterattacks.

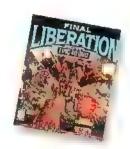
The interface for WARFLAMMER HOK is highly derivative of earlier successful SSI games. The majority of your screen is taken up by a tactical map, while the right-hand side contains control buttons and a overview of the strategic map. Many of the commands and design elements are highly derivative of other factical games, as WARHAMMER depends largely on its science-fletion universe for originality. This is by no means a badthing: I found that the game's greatest strength was its simplicity, and the freedom this gave me to play around with the multitude of original units and unit combinations. As with all good tactical games, combined operations is a key to victory. Depending on the race you are playing, you will have to deal with radically different unit maxes that will greatly

affect your strategy once the battle is Joined

AS UNSIGHTLY AS **ORKISH MUGS**

Having said this, be warned that on a purely visual level, WARFIAMMER 40K is perhaps the ugliest game I have seen in ages. I have always been an advocate of strong gameplay over flashy graphies and design, yet I can't help feeling that a better color palette and more erisp graphics in the tactical battle screen would have helped this game a lot

This is all the more surprising because once you enter the codex (WARHAMMER's online reference guide), the background images are quite attractive. However, the text that serolls over these background images to provide you with hard



System Requirements: Pent um 90 (P120 recommended), 16MB RAM, 30MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM (4x recommended), SVGA graphics, mouse, supports Win 95-compatible sound cards 3D Support: None **Multiplayer Support:** LAN (2-4 players), TCP/IP (2-4 players) Hotseat (2-4 players). Modem/Senal (2 players); 1 CD per player

Price: \$49 99

Designer: Holistic Publisher: SSc Sunnyvale, CA (800) 601-7529 www.ssienline.com



FECH TOYS IN A SANDBOX Warhammer tabletop miniatures come to life on your computer-if you can ignore the dull background graphics.

MARCH 1998

mformation is blocky, hard to read, and generally ugly.

To my mand, ugliness is no reason not to buy a game, and I'm quite certain that the market has already seen far too many attractive, yet mindless, games. But, unless you have an Orkish appreciation of art, you will probably find combat to be blocky and a tad dark. Once the battle begins, however, you should soon find yourself emoying the challenge enough to overcome the visual mess.

WARHAMMER gives classic boardgame fans all of the aspects of turn-based combat that are so difficult to manage on a tabletop. Recommissance and line-of-

sight are crucial, as ambushes are frequent and generally costly Supporting artillery is handled quite well, particularly when it comes to defensive opportunity fire during the enemy's turn. The WARHAMMER battlefield is a hostile and unforgiving place. While your massive Titan AFVs might be able to rumble

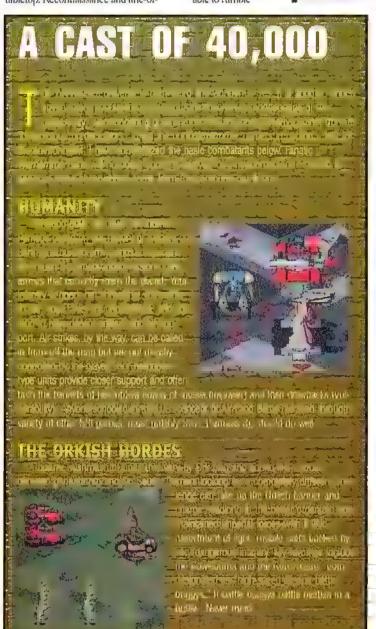


BAD MOON RISING Here's a good view of the scale in WARHAMMER 40K; The diminutive Bad Moon Boyz (left) charge like a wave of ants against a group of Stege Artillery.

staight into the heart of the enemy's defenses without risk of immediate death (at least for a while), most of your other forces will have to be very careful in how they move and use cover if they are to succeed. In particular, it doesn't pay to be cavalter with your infantry, and the game does a good job of creating a sense of loss when one of your infantrymen screams and goes down

WARHAMMER 40K excels at forcing you to trade off between speed and risk, and also to make the complementary trade between moving weak units on their own or loading them into armored earriers (and so risking a true catastrophe if the carrier is bit)

Personally, I have always thought that Lictical wargames are, by definition, somewhat limited in their scope. The game designers must always strive to add as many variables as possible to compensate for the lack of big decision-making power that can lead to repetitious play. The depth of the WARHAMMER universe belps out a lot in this respect, as the range of weapons, enemies, and allies—along with terrain and diverse scenarios—gives you a pretty decent mix of toys to play with and different places in which to play. Other than better graphics, what more could you ask for?



▶ APPEAL: For fans of Warhammer or anyone who wants a good tactical hame.

PROS: Simple and challenging it really is Warksonner.

• C Coes Ugly background art.





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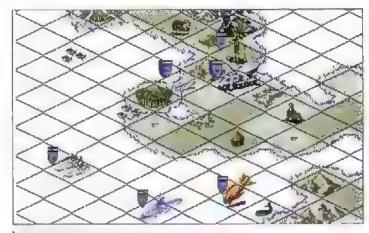
by Mike Fay

icroProse has breathed more life into one of the most celebrated strategy gamies, SID MEJER'S CIVILIZATION IF The Cr. II. FANTASTIC WORLDS expansion set (MicroProse no longer has the rights to the word "Civilization")

offers 19 diverse fantasy and sei-fi seenarios, and a greatly enhanced toolkit for making your own worlds. Some of the scenarios are so unusual that they give Civ II a whole new feel.

SPACESHIPS AND SORCERY

The set includes It new MicroProse scenarios and 8"Best of the Net" scenarios, culled from the dozens available on the Internet. While the Civil engine is used, many game aspects are changed, including unit properties, graphies, sounds, the research tree, and even terrain graphics and functionality. The results are rich and novel. The Jules Verne retro sci-fi scenario has quaint Victorian-era noits and wacky discoverles from an age when exploration, intellect, and science could tame the great tinknown, Contrast that to the X-COM scenario, which has almost no research or production - Just a battalion of



FIRE AND ICE Scenarios run the gamut from fantasy/magic to sci-fi to whimsy.

marines plunked down on Mars to exterimmate an alien infestation. A number of the seenarios start with plenty of teelinotogy already researched and many units already placed. MicroProse put a lot of work into its Midgard fantasy seeparto, as well as its MASTER OF ORION and MASTER OF MAGICiones. Other see parios feature dinosaurs, a medievallapan setting. American Indian tribes, a battle of the sexes, an interesting microbiology setting with "cultural" advancements like cilia, and even an alternate world populated by teddy bears.

EXPANDED TOOLKIT

If you're not into fantasy or sel-fi, you might still want the enhanced seenano

> toulkit. It covers lots of ground: universal effects, event triggers, city improvements, tech advances, terrain properties (vest), and tribe properties. You ean eastly edit unit properties and individual unit sounds via menus. And graphics can be edited easily for unils, city improvements, tech advances, terrain, and cities There are slots for 8 new units and

up to 100 tech advances. The macro language has been expanded, with better handles on detecting who did what to whom, and the Civ II-FW menu-driven events editor now has 10 triggers and 11 actions. Scenarios designed by users prior to Civ II: PW will work, although they might require minor modifications.

The improved toolkit is not perfect. The effects of Wonders of the World still can't be changed (although they can be renamed and reassigned). Some of the text and help displays in modified secoarjos look unpolished, and not all graphics can be changed. Don't be surprised if the steamy Egyptian messenger hails you on the frigid plants of an icy planet

Civil: Paytastic Word Ds is the obvious next advance for anybody who wants to be more "civilized," If you like set-filor fantasy seenanos, or you want to edit new worlds, this is a must-have expansion pack &

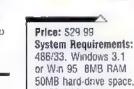
>APPEAL: Civ It fans; turn-based strategy gamers with a taste for fantasy or sci-fi.

PROS: Rich fantasylsel-fi scenar-

ios: major design-kit enhancement.

>CONS: Still Civ If at its core; toolkit not completely comprehensive.



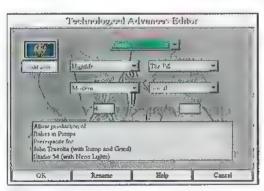


or Win 95 8MB RAM 50MB hard-drive space. 2x CD-ROM drive, Windows-compatible mouse and sound card. Sip ME ER's CIVILIZATION II

3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: None.

Designer: MicroProse Publisher: MicroProse Alameda, CA (510) 864-4550

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Yesterday's News

Interplay Delivers Too Little, Too Late



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT EARTH 2140 is a good-looking 1996 game, but today, it just seems to be a competent REO ALERT clone.

by Martin E. Cirulis

ble with today's highexpectation consumers when the biggest bring on your box is "Sturning 16-bit color graphies." The problem is even worse when your game IS a COMMAND & CONDUES clone and you're trying to sell it on those crowded Christmas shelves. This is the unfortunate situation facing Interplay's EARCH 2140. And while it turns out there is more to this game than nice graphics, the ugly truth is that the real-time world passed this title by before it even got out of its development cycle

ou know you're in trou-

SAME AS IT EVER WAS

The biggest hurdle EARTH 2140 faces is how to get gamers to want to play yet another version of C&C—though to be fair, we are tooking at a RED ALEKI—era clone here. Earth is a ravaged wasteland with only two great powers left. The Eurasian Dynasty and the Union of Civilized States. Neither has anything better to do than argue about how to further rape what is left of the planets.

resources. I suppose you could consider this slightly illogical setup a glimpse into a nonenvironmental future.

From here its the same old boild, mine, and demolish gameplay. There's the usual mix of open-ended base-building scenarios sprinkled with quest missions, as well as two campaigns with bare-bones stones. I lowever, the scenarios and maps themselves are small and tedious, instead of wide-open and involving. If all of this seems novel to you, let me be the first to welcome you to our planet.

The units themselves are varied and interesting, with the UCS concentrating on 'mech-type units and the ED sticking mainly to good old-fashioned tanks. The developers have also done some good things with the basic combat model,

• OLD-SCHOOL PLAY Scenario design in EARTH 2140 seems tedfous and too limited.

making buildings vulnerable to enemy occupation, for example. This means you have to consider garrisoning troops inside vital structures, as well as outside. Units in EARTH 2140 are also more inclined to roam than their counterparts in other games, and this is both good and bad. Since fire is an important combat effect, it's nice to see units smart enough to get away from spreading flames. (Though it might have been nice to see a movement Al smart enough to drive around an already burning square in a unit's path.)

The downside is that even if you set your units to a purely defensive posture, they tend to wander about. You end up spending a lot of effort herding units back into the defensive positions you set for them. Another glitch is that your units will knidly move out of the way to let an enemy unit past

HISTORY LESSON

There are unteresting touches sprinkled throughout EARTH 2140, but the sad truth is this: There just isn't enough originality here to raise this title above mediocrity. The standards of real-time gaming set by such games as DARK REIGN and TOTAL ANNIHATION have left a game like this behind. These days, you can get away with lacking 3D terrain or a construction kit—but not both.

If FARTH 2140 had been released before RED ALERF, it would have been revolutionary. But today, it seems only like a welf-done clone bound to be lost amid the horde of C&C copycats. §

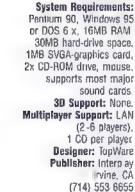
FAPPEAL: New players who have yet to play C&C.

PROS: Nice graphics; Interesting units; adequate AI,

COMS: Nothing to raise it above

the level of last year's C&C clones; weak scenarios and maps; some questionable pathfinding.





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Constitut (\$1997.30b; Interactive Interactive interaction will be determined by number of valid entries received.

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The Great Bland Menace

Clancy's Strategy Debut Is Long on Boredom and Short on Gameplay

by Martin E. Cirulis

wo things are apparent after
your first hour of playing
POLITIKA. The first is that
'forn Clamey is really into
bituself, and the second is
that there are countless
other boardgames more
worthy of being ported to
the PC. What we have here
is a competent, yet uninspired, wargame that marks somewhere

spired, wargame that ranks somewhere between Risk and Axis and Allies in terms of complexity, but far below either when it comes to playability.



The first hurdle in this game is getting past the 4,732 uses of form Claricy's name, the paperback novel by the techno-thriller master himself, and the 15 minutes of fake news footage featuring Clancy multering about Russian power-play politics following Boris Yellsin's death. Should you survive this last ordeal, you find yourself facing a nice map of Russia divided into a bunch of provinces tagged with colored markers representing the influence of the eight factions struggling for control.

You begin play by placing your two representatives (cute little Monopoly-style icons) on the board. These represent the focus of your political interest. The basic point of the game is to be the one with the most markers and money at the end of a preset number of turns. You gain markers by "attacking" your opponents' colors through a process of "buying" dice with eash or eards, and then rolling those dice. Roll high and the targeted opponents' marker turns to your color. If your victim rolls higher, nothing happens except you're out some money and cards.

That's pretty much as exciting as it gets. Each faction has a special ability, such as



OLD GUARD The gameplay in Politika is bone-dry. The pacing is also excruciatingly slow, in single- and multiplayer games.

in Claricy's getting more money or steaking cards, which helps to spice things up. Special event cards—a crude simulation of random, realistic, and sometimes tomultinous events—also keep things from being too straightforward. Unfortunately, in terms of gameplay, there's not a whole lot more here. For Diplomacy funs, this can be a fan game of wheeling and dealing over single victory points. Anyone else should avoid this coup.

DON'T PLAY IT AGAIN

POLITIKA may be one of those rare cases in which the board version actually plays faster than the computer game It makes ADVANGED CIVILIZATION look like a chek-fest. I thought for a while that this was only a side effect of playing an obviously social game in single-player mode. When I signed onto the free RedStorm server, though, I discovered that multiplayer mode was even more tections.

While the Internet play was definitely designed to be an organic component of the game (rather than a tacked-on after-

thought), its unfortunate that the source material is so dry. There are much better games available that cover much the same territory, and the monotony is only compounded by some bad choices in execution. If the presentation were slicker and smoother, if the game were filled with Russian multimedia treats, and if the computer players were given more personality, this game could have been average. But apart from a few cute animated icons, POLITIKA is utterly devoid of the character it so desperately needs.

DAPPEAL: Diplomacy fans (tching for a computer game; rabid Tom Clancy readers.

PROS: Free novel; some shades of intriguing wheeling and dealing gameplay.

PCONS: Too much introductory fluff before the game; unexciting gameplay; yawningly slow pace.









...did you get those cards?



DUELS OF THE PLANESWALKERS"

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'MicroProse's game offers weeks to months of gamoplay,'
Computer Gaming World, June '97

عاشكات

"Magic. The Gathering is just what the Samite Healer ordered." Computer Games Strategy Plus, June '97

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Newsweek, April '97

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a Auto The side Heath is



Full Throttle



CART Precision Racing Is One of the Best Auto-Racing Sims Ever

by Scott A. May



icrosofts commitment to Windows 95 games may be genuine, but so far, other than AGE OF EMPIRES, the publisher hasn't produced much to brug about. This all changes with the release of CART PRECISION

RACING, an Indy Car simulator unlike anything else you've ever seen or played. The folks at Papyrus (INDYCAR RACING II) and Psygnosis (FORMULA FI) have reason to be worded, because CART is nothing short of brillant.

The game authentically simulates the 1997 PPC CART World Series schedule, encompassing a graeling 17-track tour of the best courses available. The tracks actade dedicated ovals (Michigan, Fontana, Milwankee, and Miami), claborate temporary street courses (Queensland, Detroit, and Vancouver), and beautifully landscaped permanent road tracks.

(Laguna Seea, Portland, and Elkhart Lake) A full roster of 1997 PPC racing teams is also represented, featuring 17 teams and 26 drivers, complete with career stats, highlights, and biographies of each driver

Race types include Single Race
Weekend—a six-step series of practice
and qualifying rounds that leads to a
Sunday race—Full Race Season, Test
Drive, and Quick Race. Intimidated by
the track selection? Study the 'liack Info,
an overhead diagram marked with grid
positions, gearing, passing, and caution
zones. Click Track Tour for a cockpitmounted full-motion video tour of the
actual course in action.

AUTO SHOP

Before you punch the ignition button, take time to visit the Garage, one of the most outstanding features in a game filled with pleasures. No other meing sim comes close to matching CART's fully stocked tune-up shop. Here you can plan pit strategies, adjust aerodynamics (Curney flaps and wing angles), drive

game was so new that finding available online competition proved impossible, so this aspect remains untested.

CART's on-track graphics are superb.
This is — without a doubt — the bestlooking racing stm on any format. The
game supports, but doesn't require,
MMX chapsets and Direct3D-compatible accelerated video cards. I ran the



DEAD HEAT Whether you're matched against an aggressive computer Al or up to eight players, via the Internet, CART offers nonstop racing challenges.

lines, tires (compound, pressure, and stagger), and suspension (axle, comer, and damping), among many others. All vehicles enter the garage using preset default values for each track. You can then make adjustments, take a quick test drive, and return to the garage for finetuming. A Virtual Mechanic, featuring advice by real-life CART engineer Nigel Benett, can analyze your settings and make necessary recommendations.

Multiplayer options include up to four players battling head-to-head on the internet—via Microsoft's free online garning service, The Zone—or up to eight players connected to a LAN. Unfortunately, as of this writing, the

game with both Rendition and Voodoo cards, and each performed flawlessly. Photorealistic prerendered backdrops—replete with recognizable landmarks, such as the St. Louis Arch—swirl about in smooth 360-degree motion, as the track smakes seamlessly below, creating believable ambience.

CART's Instant Replay screen is yet another highlight, featuring 12 camera views (each of which you can manually zoom or rotate), VCR-style controls, and eight types of Pi race analysis graphs. Use these graphs to study your racing habits, such as lateral/inline acceleration, steering angle, braking, throttling, engine



Price: \$54 95 System Requirements: Pentium 60 (P166 recommended), Windows 95 or NT 16MB RAM (32MB recommended), 30MB harddrive space (100M8 recommanded) 2x CD-ROM drive, supports MMX and AGP technologies. DirectSoundcompatible sound cards mouse, and force-feedback joysticks, LAN connection or modern required for head-to-head play 3D Support: Direct3D-compatible video cards Multiplayer Support: LAN (2-8 players, 1 CD per player), Internet (1-4 players, 1 CD per player) Designer: Terminal Reality Inc. Publisher: Microsoft Redmond, WA (206) 882-8080 www.microsoft.com speed, and gearing. More than just technical window dressing, these graphs will actually help you improve your on-track performance.

CHROME WHEELED

This game is so full of subtle graphical treats, it's difficult to know where to begin. As your vehicle eats up the asphalt, trackside objects such as trees and buildings gradually materialize—as opposed to suddenly popping up, as in almost all other racing sims—showcasing the 3D card's transparency effects. And take a gander at your race in instant replay, using the "race" view cament. The combination of 3D perspective correction and surround sound stereo will make you think you're watching a video chip from an actual race. Outstanding!

High-performance stereo surround sounds also play a big part in CARTs hyper-realism. Slide off the track and you'll hear the squishy sound of slick tires on wet grass. Jam an opponent or kiss the retaining wall too hard and you'll hear the sickening sound of metal scraping the ground or rubbing against your tires. Even off-track noise is presented with sensational Doppler stereo effects. The only thing missing is the annoying chalter of a race announcer, a feature most serious lindy Car fans would turn off anyway.

Now for an annoyance: Microsoft's minimum requirements for the game last a Pentium 60, but recommend a PI66. That's quite a jump. I tested the game on a P90, and the frame rate sputtered and control was taxing, even with a 3D video eard. To achieve decent ani-



 HEY HEY WE'RE A GREASE MONKEY CART's fully equipped garage lets drivers tinker and test-drive almost any setting, with instant analysis by engineer Nigel Benett

mation, I had to seriously dumb down the graphics by removing all back grounds, trackside objects, special effects, and vehicle detail. On the higher end, I then ran the game on my P233 MMX machine with Monster 3D video card. The frame rate burned off the charts, even with all graphic and sound details set to max. The moral here: CART is designed for high-performance machines, period, if your system is less than capable, this will be a frusimling experience. If you've got the horsepower, prepare to be blown away by one of the speediest, most graphically rich racing sims on the market

CHECKERED FLAG

Controls can be set to keyboard, joystick, gamepad, or steering wheel, with

> special support for force-feedback sticks. Again, control responsiveness is directly related to machine speed. On a slow system, there's a maddening delay between steering response and on-screen action, which typically sends your vehicle

swerving all over the track. On a high end system, control is crisp and tight. A plethora of driving aids are at your disposal, depending on your skill setting, including autobrake, spin correction, ened shifting, traction control, and driving cones.

There are also realism settings designed to create a more authentic driving experience, including fire wear, crash damage, fuel consumption, and temperature effects. My personal favorite is head panning, available in cockpit view, which smallates the turn of a divers head as he enters a curve. The camera shifts slightly off-center, into the turn, amplifying the feeling of actually being in the car. What's truly amazing is that no one had thought of this before

Overall, the verdict on this game is a simple one: Packed with features, options, and the widest variety of tracks found in any PC racing sim, Whorosoft's CART PRECISION RACING qualifies as the best game of its type ever produced.

► APPEAL: Intermediate to advanced IndyCar-style racing fans.

PROS: Stunning graphics; support for 30-accelerated video; excellent

frame rate; aggressive computer Al; driving school; options galore.

CONS: Long load times; steep system requirements.





Be sure to check out Microsoft's Cart Precision Racing on this month's CG-ROM



 RACING À LA MODE Use CART'S PI Analysis graphs to study your on-track performance and fine-tune your driving skills.



Underachiever

The Usual Action Thrills, But MADDEN Still Misses the Mark

by Dennis McCauley

Is is is is is is is is in the control of the contr

neshon. What do Rocket Ismail, Rick Mirer, and Heath Shaler have in cornmon? Answer: They're all high draft choices, yet not one has lived up to the hype that preceded his arrival on the NPL scene. While we're on the topic, feel free to add EA Sports' MADDEN NPL.

98 to your list of pro football letdowns. Sure, it's a good game that's fun to play and is chock-full of eye candy. But it's not the bulked-up MADDEN that gamers had been drooling for

Even before last summer's F3, sources at EA Sports hinted that traditionally areade-oriented MADDEN would be encroaching onto the football sam turf normally dominated by Sierra's FRONT PAGE SPORTS, FOOTBALL PRO series. Anticipation ran accordingly high among hard-core sports gamers.

The tip-off that there would ultimately be less to MADDEN than met the eye came, oddly enough, in the timing of the game's release. When a developer touts major enhancements to an existing system, veteran gamers have learned to expect delays— sometimes significant

delays. Surprisingly, MADDEN 98 shipped two months ahead of schedule — without a number of the expected new features.

BUTTON POUNDING

One thing MADDEN isn't missing is satisfying areade play. The action elements are quite challenging, especially at the All-Madden level. While the game supports only four-button controllers, there's enough happening on the field to keep even expert joystick jockeys furiously punching their game pads. It takes practice to be competitive at MADDEN 98. Punting is difficult to master, as is touch passing, which allows players to zing the ball past tight coverage, or loft the pigskin when they need to air it out.

Although EA Sports has made a name for itself with eye-pleasing action games, MADDEN 98 is not an especially impressive graphic achievement. In fact, the players look very much like those in last year's version. Their animations, however, are more fluid. Players make diving tackles or high-step into the end zone with a realistic strut. Beginning with this year's Win 95 version, EA Sports has employed an animation

technique they've dubbed "V-Poly," The English translation is that the players are comprised of multiple sprites, rather than the large, attractive polygons found in other EA products, such as TRIPLE PLAY 98, NBA LIVE 98, and NTIL 98.

V-Poly works well enough, but it just doesn't compare to player graphics in the rest of the EA Sports line. One thing that is impressive about MADDEN's graphics is the rendering of the stadiums. Finally, football fans have an opportunity to play in authentic venues. While MADDEN shipped without 3D hardware support, a subsequent patch added 3Dfx support, as well as additional graphical enhancements, including on-screen player names.

The camera angles in MADDEN 98 are rather limited, and feature only sideline, end zone, or blimp views, which can be set to dynamically track the action. This, however, causes no headaches in the game, since the three views function well. In the just-for-fun department, an authentic-looking Topps football card pops up when a player makes a big play or reaches a statistical milestone.

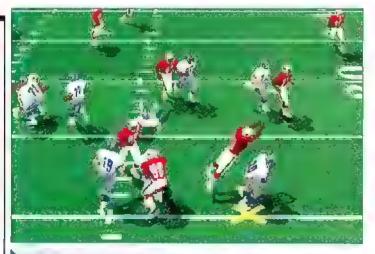
FUNNY NUMBERS

MADDEN 98 offers league and general manager utilities that seem to be part of its would-be move into sim territory. The transition would be more newsworthy, however, if the utilities worked better. The General Manager feature, for example, allows trading, but only of a brain-damaged variety in which your opponents offer a mirror anage of the players you dangle as trade bait. Put your backup quarterback on the block, for example, and your opponents offer you theirs in return. It's pretty tough to improve your club trading this way. There's no free-agent pool, either, although the player ratings do list salanes. Am I smelling a salary cap feature in next year's version? Let's hope so!

League play options include simulating the 1997 NFL season or creating a smaller league with a randomly generated



Price: \$49.95 System Requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 133, 75MB hard-drive space, 16MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive. High-color 1M8 Direct Draw-compatible video card, DirectX 5 0compatible sound card mouse. Supports most popular gamepads. 30 Support: 3Dfx (via downloadable patch only) Multiplayer Support: LAN, modem, serial connection (2 players, 1 CD per player) Designer/Publisher: EA Sports San Mateo, CA (650) 571-7171 www.easports.com



SLICE AND DICE Barry Sanders looks for somewhere to run in Mappen NFL 98, a game with great arcade action.

schedule. CPU-simmed games zip by quickly, and generate stats that are fairly realistic Unfortunately. MADDEN's statistical presentation leaves much to be desired. It's a chore to navigate your way to the stats you want, and when you finally get there the presentation is nonstandard. While team stats are available at the league screen, you have to read the manual to know that the player stats can only be found at the franchise screen. Once there, you'll have to endure several mouse cheks to find such important stats as rushing attempts or yardsper-carry for running backs; completion percentages for quarterbacks; or even receptions for receivers. This was on unexpected fumble for a game with similike aspirations

MADDEN 98's sound is a mixed bag. There are some real ear-pleasers, such as the crowd correctly booing, cheering, or shouting "deefense" in response to the game situation. Of course, John Madden's witty gridiron insights are always a welcome addition. On the other

hand, play-by-play man Pat Summerall brings little of note. Summeralls gifts as a broadcaster simply don't shine through. Occasional errors also occur, causing misstatements of the game situation Most annoying, however, are the contact sounds—these sound more like someone tumbling down a flight of stairs. The good news is that you can toggle off the sounds that offend the ear, and keep the ones that don't.

THE PLAY'S THE THING

EA Sports has spent a great deal of energy trumpeting the "Liquid AI" an MADDEN 98. The term refers to an enhanced player ability to read and react to plays, and not merely follow a set of pre-programmed instructions. While it's difficult to gauge the overall effectiveness of the new AI, players do seem to move authentically. The AI problems that troubled me, however, related.



DUMBER THAN DAVIS? MADDEN 98's General Manager feature is marred by a brain-dead trade feature.



STEAMIN' RICE Topps football cards provide rice eye candy when players hit statistical milestones or make big plays.

primarily to offensive play-calling, and the tendency of quarterbacks—even very good quarterbacks—to throw into triple- and quadruple-coverage.

As an example, during a Chiefs-Dolphins game, the CPU-controlled Fish, trading by two TDs well into the fourth quarter, went for it on 4th-and-18. No problem there, Ignoring the strong right arm of one Dan Marino, however, the computer called a draw play — and got stuffed. The EA Sports team also needs to address a work stoppage of sorts on the part of running backs, who occasionally freeze after taking a hand-off. The referees may also be on strike, since penalty calls seem rare.

Play selection in MADDEN is serviceable, but suffers from the lack of a play design utility. With both Siema's FRONT PAGE and OT Sports' MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL offering substantial playdesign features, MADDEN must address this area in future versions. Multiplayer options at press time were limited to modern, senal, or IPX A patch offering Internet play was announced, but not yet released.

FEEL THE POWER

Despite some warts, MADDEN 98 is an enjoyable game. The smooth player animations and good-looking stadiums add a lot to the pro football feel. There's an incredible selection of historical NFL and APL teams that's sure to please the type of hardcore fan who salivates at the thought of pitting the '67 Packers against the '69 Namath-led lets. Especially appealing is the improved Madden 101. which explains sophisticated offensive and defensive theory in a clear, concise manner that, in itself, is almost worth the price of admission. As a bornis, there's a multimedia scouting report of each NFL team, and brief video histones of most clubs as well.

Aspiring to bridge the gap between its own classic areade elements and the sim orientation of its more cerebral competition, MADDEN finds itself hamstrung by weak G.M. and stat modules, as well as a lack of play-design capability. It's better than last year's version, but once again, MADDEN will be watching the playoffs from home. **5**

DAPPEAL: Arcade sports gamers; HFL history buffs; John Madden fans.

PROS: Fluid animation, challenging arcade elements, tons of classic teams, a chance to learn from the master.

>cons: Weak trade and stat modules; no playdesign utility; curious Al play-calling; frozen runningback bug.





Rebuilding Year

Sierra's Storied Franchise Finally Falls From Its Lofty Perch

by Terry Coleman

ritics-come-lately would have you believe that the FRONT PAGE FOOTBALL has been in steady decline since the publication of the original FOOTBALL PRO. This is pure, unnutigated crap. The series did hit its peak with FPS FOOTBALL PRO

'95, but few gaming franchises have endured quite the roller-coaster ride of this one. Last year, FPS FOOTBALL PRO '97 did a lot toward redeeming the franchise—once you installed the inevitable second or third patch. Problem is, Sierra seems to be in a down cycle with this year's version, and a patch alone may not be enough to rescue it.

The big question has to be: Where's the 3D hardware support? After all, EPS FOOTBALL PRO '98 is a true physics-based sim, not a stat-freak affair. The game engine moves 22 simulated players around the screen in realtime, and employing some kind of

second or third patch. Problem is, Sierra seems to be in a down cycle with this year's version, and a patch alone may not be enough to rescue it.

ILLEGAL MOTION

The big question has to be: Where's the 3D hardware support? After all,



TURF PORTRAITS As this close-up shows (top), FPS Football Psp '98 doesn't look as great during gameplay as the slick interface screen (bottom) would have you believe.

End-of-Y	ear Stats

New Feature	Gains Yardage	Penalized for
	You can actually pass	
Radio commentary		Statis gameplay
CAMS system	Still-fiuld camera work	Defaults to TV view
	Unique in sports games	
	Ratter than most games	
3D anvironment	True physics-based	
Fast-sim made		it's still inaccurate
Play aditer	Still robust	Flaky play update

3D support would both help the frame rate and allow for more intricate 3D player models.

Also, the interface has inexplicably changed for the worse. Sure, it's flashier, but it's also more difficult to get around in, especially when you're playing in career mode over the course of several

seasons. It's hard to fathom why this latest edition — which looks disturbingly similar to its DOS origins — requires so much hardware for so bittle return FPS FOOTBALL PRO '97, for example, runs better on a P133 than FPS FOOTBALL Pro '98 runs on a P166 MMX. Why?

Despite the fact that the developers had another year to work out the problem, multiplay over LAN or Internet is still a frustrating series of lock-ups and crashes. The touted areade mode is still far too arcane to pose any challenge to MADDEN '98. I could go on about other annoyances (and I did: see the accompanying chart), but suffice it to say that FPS FOOTBALL PRO '98 is best viewed as an expansion disk. Whether you should buy it depends on whether you want an areade game, such as MADDEN, or a serious football sim-and if you believe that Sierra can finally fix the Internet multiplay problems. As for me, I've gone back to FPS FOOTBALL Pro '97-still the best pigskin simulation on the market. S

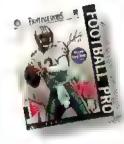
▶APPEAL: For serious football fans only.

PROS: Still the best football sim; better ball movement; new graphics; aggressively

Interface; crashes/lock-ups, particularly in multiplay; no 3D hardware support.

priced.





Price: \$29.95

System Requirements: Pentium 75 (P133 recom-

mended), Windows 95, 16MB RAM (32MB recommended), 150MB harddrive space, SVGA graphics 2x CD-ROM (4x CD-ROM recommended), mouse supports Win 95-compatible sound cards and joysticks. 3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: Internet LAN, and Sierra Internet Gaming Service (2) players), 1 CD per player. Designer: Synergistic **Original Front Page** Football Design: Patrick Cook Publisher: Sierra On-Line. Bellevue, WA (800) 757-7707 www.slerra.com



PGL OFFICIAL NEWSUPDATE

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THE AMOTICL" - CHANGING THE FACE OF COMPENTIVE GAMING

One of the goals of the PGL has been to create a single, central location in top-tier gamers to struct their stuff. Well, we've prove to report that this objective was met the day we opened the PGL door. — quickly as PC officials saunched the league! This qualification period, hings go subsections: With so much fame, fortune and reputation as for grabs, player.



immediately got down to the business of making the full to participal in the RCI regular maso. "No more trash-talking very little loking. Name a good game a Whoop RefCankilla is in da house!"

It was all about kill be killed. "I

ESULT TO PER THE HOLD INTERNATION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPE

QUAKE



command & Conquery Red Mercial

PGL SEASON 2 IS STARTING SOON AND AS PROMISED, IT WILL FEATURE NEW ACTION AND STRATEGY CAMES AND A NEW CAME CATEGORY, REPLACING THE ALL-TIME CLASSICS QUAKE AND COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT WILL BE THE HOTTEST NEW TITLES, OURSE IS AND YOU'LL ANNUGUEATION. **QUAKE II IS WAY MORE EXTREME THAN** THE ORIGINAL, WITH EVEN MORE DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS, SPRAWLING LEVELS AND JAW-DROPPING GRAPHICS. TOTAL ANNIHILATION IS THE MOST SOPHISTICATED STRATEGY GAME EVER. COMBINING 3D ARTICULATED BATTLE UNITS WITH VIRTUALLY LIMITLESS **EXPANSION CAPABILITIES. TURNING UP** THE COMPETITIVE HEAT EVEN FURTHER. THE PCL WILL ADD A THIRD CATEGORY IN SEASON 2: ACTION TEAMPLAY, WITH

QUAKE II AS THE
CATEGORY TITLE. SO
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for station and show time specifics
Highlights, standings, league reports and

player interviews the PGL is on TV on TV com-



עסגער זעיוויוניער דעופג.

WAR — WHATEVER, BUT BE SURE TO CHECK OUT WWW.PGL.COM TO GET THE LATEST NEWS ON SEASON 2.

RANKINGS

When you establish the first pro sports league for computer gamers, you've gotta expect thousands of players to show up. So how do you separate the great gamers from the good? By running 'em all through a rigorous month-long qualifying round and evaluating their skills every step of the way. Using the most sophisticated rankings database on the planet, courtesy of TENTM, the PGL took nearly 1,500 Season I entrants and found the top 256. This isn't one of those wimpy ranking systems that just calculates your "kill-to-death" rate. This is the "two years in the making, two years of real-world usage" ranking system that all the other gaming sites and services have been trying to duplicate. Based on the logic and methodology of the U.S. Chess Federation system. the PGL ranking engine screams. With every encounter in every match, the PGL ranking machine considers the relative skill level of each opponent. while re-calculating your rank in real-time. See your position in the standings updated instantaneously every time you exit a match. Leaf through the reams of background data to analyze your opponents' (or your own) strengths, weaknesses, preferred weapons, and other tendencies. Or, just gaze enviously at Reptile's and B2's immaculate stats and dream of the day ...

PGL RANKINGS

Season I **Qualification Period**

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT

Rank

Screen Name Score

1	B/2	19640
2	SOLJA	19242
3	push	18974
4	N-same	(8687
5	MOBBIN	18433
6	unabomber1	18415
7	Havoc3	18396
8	Hoggleford	18395
9	WaGnaRd	18303
10	DeepBlue	18287
	QUAKE	
	QUARE	
Rank	Screen Name	Score
 Rank	Screen Name Rept-POST	Score 20308
 ************	Screen Name Rept-POST Azrael 13	***************************************
 1	Screen Name Rept-POST	20308
 1 2 3 4	Screen Name Rept-POST Azrael 13	20308 20135
 î 2 3	Screen Name Rept-POST Azraeli3 frick dmann B2	20308 20135 20014
 1 2 3 4	Screen Name Rept-POST Azraeli3 frick dmann B2 cabalist	19909 50017 50132 50308
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Screen Name Rept-POST Azrael13 frick dmann B2 cabalist graphik	20308 20135 20014 19909 19662
 1 2 3 4 5	Screen Name Rept-POST Azraeli3 frick dmann B2 cabalist graphik Di3-Unholy	20308 20135 20014 19909 19662 19489 19106
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Screen Name Rept-POST Azrael13 frick dmann B2 cabalist graphik	20308 20135 20014 19909 19662 19489

PLAYER PROFILES

BJ2 Young Gun of the Strategy Sol from rising to the spole positions in the Red Alert division of the PGUs inaugural season. Although he's only been playing for nine months; Bj2 has risen through the Red Alert ranks on TEN, residing on the top-so-list-for some time now, Being seeded #2 in the strategycategory of the PGL's lunugural season is just his latest gaming accomplishment. And with hour years to go before callege rears its ugly head. Big stands to enjoy his pro gamer stall tus for some time to come. "I'm not-sure how my parents would react if I told them I was blowing off-college to 'pursue a pro-career' as a computer gamer?" he laughs:

His diduction couldn't gripe the much; since he's the one who got Bj2 started in the online gaming space. My dad and I began playing Red Alert last winter from the CD. Em losed in the CD was an advertisement for TEN, and we decided it would be a great shallenge to test our skills against other opponents around the country," he says: They set up the account #8jz# primarily for Ben to play; his father's invelvement was mostly te ensure that TEN was a safe environment for kids. As we began to play more my skills surpassed any, dadis, and he started dragging my rank down, so I gave him the boot! III while kles

In the moment, and the new horses were company, the artificial of personally prefer. works games of Red Alert on TEN, shouse they're more excling, with the cooperation and coordination necessary to work as a team. Butesion-1 matches, like the PGL offers, really bring out an individual players true skills; you can tell pretty quickly if you've facing a strong adversory. And in the PGL, nearly every player is a high-callber apponent.



Name: han helms A.K.A: Bla Age: in Tear played I month.
Arch nemesle: Hoggleford of Unabomben:
Favorite Partner: My long time TRN friend and partner, ACYDOR
Preferred Weapons: Russian Heavy Tank
Controller: Meuse and Keyboard
Honon/Awards: Top 10 in Red Alere and TRN for a long while and
finished number. In and Alert pyl qualification.

Residence: Tennemice Connection: 48.8 CPU Speed: 100 Mm. Favorite level: Bath Reyend and No Meeps Hobbies: Football, Water Skiing, Beard War Comment Favorite Saying: Bring it on, Loysill

Reptile Scaling the PGL Banks

I have been playing video and computer mines for nearly three quarters of his life. At twenty-one, he says that amounts to more than to occ hours of electronic gaming in one form or enother. But from his vantage point perchad stop the PGL QUAKE leader board, it looks like time well spent. The PGL came along at the perfect time for me, since I'm just hitting my stride in terms of gaming skills. And since I'm allii, protty, young, i think there's still reem for improvement in my game," he states,

An accomplished practitions of "close-up" (coin and card) magic, Reptile has made many an opposent disapparting cloud of smoke and gibbage. Just like performing magic wicks, the key in QUAKE or any action game is to immerse yourself is what you're doing and

to it again and again until it becomes almost second nature;" says Reptile.

Being ranked number one among the self-action games who "made the cut" in
PGL Season's doesn't come as a surprise to the ultra-competitive Reptile. While he doesn't think of himself as the very best (yet), he prides himself on being extremely confident in him abilities and aggressive in his approach to the game. If know there are players out there who get more recognition and are considered better than are dim confident exough in my abilities that I relish the prospect of playing the best. And I truly believe I have a legitimation chance to best sayone, when I go so the Internet looking for my much visite!"



Name: Jim Bangon A.R.A. Rept-POST (aka Reptile) Age: Pears players
Freferred Weapons: Lightning Gun and Rocket Launche
Controller: Legitech Mouse and Microsoft Keyboard
Honors/Awards: Top S in Red Ampibilation Teurnament Residence: Chatsworth, CA Connection: Tr. CPU Speed: #66mil Favorite levels: BMS, DML, DMs

Hobbies: Close-up Magic, Basketball, Multiplayer Computer Game Favority Saying: Would you like some chases with that whise??

BOARD MEMBERS

The PCL's governing poard it a veritable "who a who of electronic entertainment industry luminaries. Beginning with commissioner Holan Buthnell, the board's Illustrious members have each been responsible for some of the biggest hits that this business has ever seen. Here's a closer look at two influential BCL board members

BRETT SPERRY: President

President, Worthwide

Publishing, Virgin Interactive

Sperry conounded Westwood

Studios in 1985. His passion for

leadership continues to keep the company at the top of the entertainment seftware industry year after year. Sperry remains actively involved in product development and has been a key architect and creative force sehind several product lines including the Eye of the Beholder and Lands of Lone fantasy games. The Kyrandia Adventures, and the Command & Conquestrategy line.

The POL warmy as important for the entertainment software industry is it is for the gamens themselved. The industry needs a platform that will raise computer gaming to the level of other competitive sports, and attract a broad consumer market of both participants and speciators. I've been in the computer games business for a dozen years, and the PGL is the most exciting single concept I've encountered during that time.

Brett Sperial

PETER MOLYNEUX: Founder/Managing Directe Limite and Studios Peter Molyneux is one or the

west-known names in the international world of computer games: He co-founded Bullfrog Productions in 1987 and single-handedly created a new genre of computer games (the !god game! with the release of Populous), Over the past ten years Molyneux has been responsible for a string of immensely popular games including Rowermonger, Theme Paris Magic Carpet and most recently Dungeon Keepen Cumulative sales of his games and now approaching the ten million mark world-wide Earlier this year Molyneux les Bullfreg Productions to form a new games invelopment company, Lionhead Studio

Section Market M

\$250,000

there's witch lette cosh up for grabe in the PC low much cosh exactly? Try lyo, soor in each three machines would be more than lazo, one for the lusty year. Here's

now all the less 9927 \$120,000 (ii 535h Neolo ap fe

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U.S. Robosies 35k modems with cook! seemology



Onskur 19 genpines accelention bounds from Jase Multimedia (Veroo Rendislom^{ia s}ogsse)

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wiso genghad gamas to lamely more

www.pgl.com

RGL WHICHMAKE THE PULLS

Running the PGL at the "in-the trenches level not supposed to be pretty. It's all about orticialing, monitoring, recording and breadcasting more than 50 competitive, atructured multiplayer matches in less than 6 weeks, to determine the top 6 players in each game category. Well, the langue's reference earning their pay hig-time. "filming" each match for posterity, enforcing rules that many players have only heard about, and otherwise



members of the Post

maintaining order in games based on premeditated mass murder. The PGL officials are literally working around the clock to create the most democratic environment for serious online competition that the 'Net has ever seen Have you hugged a PGL referee today?

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THE POL WES SITES CYBER "SPONTS CENTRAL"

Whether you're among the elite players competing in the PGL or just a casual gamer. or only want to watch, the one Web site you oughtta bookmark is "www.pgl.com," home base for the Professional Gamers' League, Stats, standings, schedules, profiles, box cores, game summaries. downloadable demos, highlight reels, scouting films it's all here. Coming soon: the ability to sit back in the comfort of your home (or office cube) and watch a PGL match via streaming video. The PGL site was designed with all of the PGL audiences in mind.

from players to spectators. PGL players scout your next official match using tons of data gathered from your opponents' previous battles. Fans: read up on the personal and professional sides of PGL starlike Thresh, Pookle, DeepBlue and Azrael 13. Spectators: sheck the season schedules for upcoming PGL matches, when and where they'll be aired. etc. in short, PGL catch up on all





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Jack Attacks





JACK NICKLAUS 5 Takes LINKS Head On

by Scott A. May

alk about an unexpected surprise. How does
Accolade follow up JACK NICKLAUS 4, arguably the best golf sim on the planet?
With JACK NICKLAUS 5, of course. But what's unexpected is that JN5 comes so close on the heels of JN4—the games were

released less than seven months apart. An even bigger surprise is how Accolade made this a great game even better

The first thing you notice about JN5 is its smooth, "we've got this genre nailed" attitude. And indeed they do. A bluesy Booker T-inspired riff welcomes players to an astonishing lineup of 10, 18-hole courses, the most of any golf sim on the market in addition to the links found in the previous title, IN5 offers five new courses: exotic Hualalai. Resort Golf Club in Hawaii. South Shore Golf Club at Lake Las Vegas, Ireland's Mount Juliet Colf Club, and two original designs, Monterey Bay and Challenge at Danger Bay, both sculpted

with the built-in course architect.

BUFFER DUFFERS

Improvements to last year's model are numerous, starting with a more aggressive computer Al. Digital opponents pump up their play in response to your own increasing skills. Game speed has also been significantly tweaked, both in solo rounds and in the wide range of multiplayer modes, including serial, modem, LAN, and network connections. Accolade has made at easier to find opponents online, thanks to its new Game Matching Service, a user-friendly method of locating and matching Internet players of equal skills.

Graphics remain a highlight of JN5, which features the same groundbreaking

proprietary height-mapping model used in the previous version of the game. Came physics have been tweaked to allow for uneven and hillsade lies, which add to the game's realism. However, the biggest change is the addition of polygonal golfers, who replace the old cut-and-paste FMV images. Comprised of 2,000 polygons with motion-captured animation, the new onscreen golfers are utlerly



POLY TECH Accolade's new 2,000-count polygonal golfers deliver unprecedented detail and fluid motion. Also new: uneven lies and custom camera views.

amazing. These guys are unquestionably the most natural and lifelike digital golfers I've ever seen — they blend perfectly with the foreground graphics.

Another big change is the introduction of the MouseMeter, the latest attempt by game designers to offer a more intrinsic method of swinging the virtual club. Viewed from an overhead perspective, players move the mouse nght for backswing and then quickly to the left to make contact. Moving the mouse slightly up or down on the followthrough produces a slice or hook. Excellent try, Accolade, but no cigar. There's absolutely no way to judge how far your shot will travel based on your wrist snap. Two scerningly similar swings can vary in distance as much as 50-75 vards. Add that up over the course of 18 holes and this little gizmo can easily cost

you a match. Luckily, the MouseMeter is only an option; both double- and triple-chek swing meters are available for old-timers.

DESIGNER DREAMS

JN5s biggest draw remains its built-in course designer, a feature no other golf sim can touch with a 10-foot driver. More powerful than ever, the designer—mod-

> eled after Nicklaus Productions' own proprictary CAD system offers even greater freedom to change textures, add objects, and after course layouts. You can now also import custom graphics and sound effects created with thirdparty applications. Unfortunately, you still have to save and exit the designer to test a hole one oversight not corrected from the previous version of the game. And despite the interface improvements, the learn-

ing curve is still quite steep. But it's an investment well worth making, considering the long-term enjoyment it promises.

Overall, JACK NICKLAUS 5 is a worthy upgrade to an already classic golf sim. If you enjoyed the last round, you'll find yourself falling in love all over again.

DAPPEAL: Golf nuts of any skill.

PROS: Faster play and killer graphics; better course designer; beefed-up computer Al; choice of three types of swing mechanics.

CONS:

Optional MouseMeter swing mechanics still not a viable alternative to traditional twitch-'n'-click meters.





Price: \$39.95
System Requirements:
Pentium 120 Windows
95, 16MB RAM, 16 bit
graphics card, 4x CDROM drive, 137MB free
hard-drive space keyboard or incuse, Win
95-compatible sound
cards.

3D Support: None Multiplayer Support: Modem (2 players) serial (2 players), LAN (2–8 players); 1 CD per player.

Designer: Eclipse Enterta oment Publisher: Accolade San Jose, CA (800) 245-7744 www.accolade.com , Yarmoor [Yellow] Deprite Flatliner [Black] In a Banctioned Hatch on Sclaris.

Stone - 4rpW-> ----- Where did SW's Banshea go?

IT Chance -GrpW-> ----: It shredded my gyro!

I'm out! DEAD!

Stone -GrpW-> ----: I'm gonna need help

who's left?

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KESMAI



Dirt Ball

SODA OFF-ROAD RACING IS SO Real You'll Feel the Mud in Your Eye

by Gordon Goble



hat would you expect if Papyrus Design Group, the minds behind the classic NASCAR RACING, decided to go off-roading? Considering the source, you might

expect a realistic, off-road simulation with excellent vehicle dynamics and an accent on garage know-how. And that's a perfect description of SODA OFF-ROAD RACING.

In fact, though SODA has Papyrus' name written all over it, the company was on board in an advisory and support role only. This superb simulation was

actually erafted for Papyrus (and ultimately Sierra On-Line) by a little developer called Software Allies. which has lent a motor helping hand to previous Papyrus efforts SODA is Software Allies' first solo excursion, and it's probably the finest off-road title ever, putting to shame Accolade's altrocions Test Drive OFF ROAD and driving Microsoft's MONSTER TRUCK

MADNESS right off the road.

MY NAME IS MUD

to drive one of three different off-road. vehicle types through a variety of dirt and mick environments that often resemble roller coasters more than racetracks. The drive is slow, johnig, and difficult - just as it should be - and is perfeetly suited to anyone who appreciates the hammening that real-life off-road drivers take as they struggle to keep their mounts pointed in the right direction through the most horrid of conditions.

And we're not talking inclement weather here, folks. Indeed, SODA events always take place under glorious blue skies with just a hint of clouds. It's what they're run upon that is the cause for concern. This is loose, deep soil, the type of terrain that would bog down most any other sort of race car, the type that sprays up from tires and refuses to allow anything but a cautious, controlled approach. The fact that treacherous cliffs, steep bills, sudden abutments, and gaps in the roadway are strewn about only adds to the fear that you could be

HOOD REMOVAL MACHINE The SODA replay gives graphic proof why reverse

tossed off the beaten path at any

around. Then, on your next circuit, take the same turn at 47 mph. That 3-mph differential may well be enough to keep your tires on the ground, if you've approached the turn in the exact same manner, that is. If not, you may catch a little grass on the left, a little of that dip on the right, or merely get a little "out of shape." Whatever, there's a good chance you won't experience the same results. Nor should you

TOUCHY FEELY

SODA is perhaps the most "touchy" Papyrus litle to date, which adds to its inherent difficulty. Any fast steering maneuver is a guarantee of failure, as is quick acceleration or sudden braking. Instead, smooth, fluid movements are

the trick. Though it's frastrating and seemnigly impossible at first, considering the conditions, you simply have to stick with it on just one course, going over it again and again, until you've mastered the almost gentle driving style the game. demands. You knowkind of like what you had to do the first times you ran NASCAR RAGING.

Certamly you can't expect camage on a level of NASCAR RACING, but various body chunks do tend to

crumple and detach, and your vehicle may accrue enough damage to prematurely end your day. It's unfortunate, then, that SODA does a rather poor job of emphically highlighting crashes - it's usually a rather insignificant bump and very little audio.

Graphically, SODA seems a bit rough at first, but the pieces fall into place once you slart driving, no matter which of the



Price: \$49.95 System Requirements: Pentium 90, 16M8 RAM 60M8 hard-drive space 2x CD-ROM drive, 16-bit sound card (Win 95- and DirectX3-compatible) VLB/PCI SVGA DirectX3compatible graphics adapter

3D Support: Rend tion pased 3D-accelerator boards

Multiplayer Support: LAN (2 6 players, 1 CD per player), modem (2 players, 1 CD per player). or serial connection (2) players, 1 CD per player) Designer: Software Alies inc.

Publisher: Sierra On-Line Be levue. WA (800) 757-7707 www.sierra.com

But whether you opt for the lightweight "buggie" class, the lugh-powered SODA gives gamers the opportunity two-wheel-drive truck, or the equally potent four-wheel-drive category, one thing remains constant - SODA feels real. Take a given turn at 50 mph and watch as your rear wheels kick out from under you or your front end comes

mornent.

tracking is not recommended.

MARCH 1998

irtually every racing game since Papyrus' hey 500 hir licen limeted by any denote of a birited min her of tracks. Both wild areads games and serious dicini limit de sens a life dila alla prolonge de ma sure to the same corners, the same straights, and the same track idlosyncrasies

Particularly for Short of the same authors you want to the series for the same for the rescue with a track construction kit that's sure in cure it's easy to use and affers up results on a par with the game's propackaged circults—better, if you spend enough time and offert.

The SODA Track Besigner is a stand-alone utility that aparing piper with solding a streptic desail from the Historiany releases 👚 simple grid, as viewed through numerous free-fleating cameras. By adjusting nodes on the road surface or on the gold, the freely particles on whatever shape you dream up with whatever elevation changes strike your fancy. Monster jumps? Banked halipin turns? Figure 1 والمرازز أأالت other? No problem

After you've set the basic layout, you'll want to add some objects. The program takes care of background scenery and cordons off your track area with walls and n Jank Kie mich krop de yen. Hang yen ven tryk om 1 de kontrovier mennegel die hij Jimmy Faye had and plunk it slown in the middle of the infield, but enough objects are provided to keep most track arenitoots satisfied, including puddies, jeliage, grandstands banners, barns, and siles. In the end, I'd managed to piece tegether a challenging and I days say attractive course in just a couple of hours

The downside? Well, though you can drive your new alk of leaders and in the light name, his number erized competition you're going to have to devote several hours of your computer's time to SODA's "Learn" mode, which instills artificial intelligence into the pregram's cars (though some might argue that they don't got quite and it or augh). Fortunably, this largely was بتتيم بزيو فيالما والمنون بيرد المعالجة أتيتما أسامه والمتانية رتية غيارة تتنا quite incomplicuously in the background while you spend your time on more constructive things—like writing a game review.



TAILGATING IN THE DESERT A bumper carn view of the Goodyear Buggy,

many free-floating viewing perspectives yon've setected. The vicinity around your car is vividly rendered, with rampant texturing that offers a convinc ing sense of speed. All the vehicles move. bounce, und shodder in a wonderful re-creation of real life: the graphies lose their authenticity only under



HIGH JUMP SODA courses pack a little of everything, including monster jumps like this.

extreme bumper-to-bumper action, when you feel as if you're "merging" with the truck ahead

The game offers 12 stock coarses, each from one of three environment types (desert, country, and tropics) made up of individual palettes and unique peripheral scenery, SODA offers full Rendition support, though even with a Screamin' 3D and a P2001 was forced to lower some of the detail to bump the frame rate to oplimum levels. Fortunately, SODA packs graphic options galore and should work just fine with any upscale ng.

Of course, Papyrus wouldn't put its name on a title that didn't

feature an imposang garage and setup faciliby Such is the case with SODA, which ets you modify your setup to your beart's content - and suffer the consequences of your linkering.

All in all, SODA OFF ROAD RACING IS an appealing, original racing game with tons of cool amenities. It's a great afternative for sim racing heads who are looking for something a little off the beaten track &

>APPEAL: Off-road fans unimpressed with previous off-road games. Sim racers who aren't put off by a substantial learning curve and a new way to drive.

PROS: Amazing vehicle physics and dynamics; lovely foreground texturing that conveys speed and direction; great track designer; PC offroading has never felt this real.

CONS: Marginally lagged graphics; annoyingly insignificant crash indicators: vehicles in extreme close proximity can appear to "merge."







Refirst of a Legend.

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Ithough both start with
"f" and end with "ier," any
third-grader can tell you
that "fancier" and "funnier" aren't synonyms
'This is why it's a little disappointing to see the
very talented folks at
Berkeley Systems
assuming that making

a game fancier automatically makes if finnier, as well

The YOU DON 1 KNOW JACK games tof which YOU DON'T Know Lyck 3 and You Don't KNOW JACK TV are numbers five and six) have never been very fancy. but they've always been incredibly, wickedly, naughtily, and uproariously furmy. Now come the latest installments, and all of a sudden everything's fancier. The visuals are still almost all text, but now the text scrolls and spirals and flows and swooshes on and off the screen: now a right answer causes the player's numeral to be showered with dollar bills or celebrated with fireworks, while a wrong answer causes the number to be crushed under a falling anvil But furmer it isn't. Indeed, the wit that has always been the hallmark of this sterling series suddenly seems somebow...strained. Can it be that after writing something around 50,000 smart-alecky trivia questions and silly gag answers, the writers are beginning to rist out of ideas?



Price: \$29 99 (each) System Requirements: 486/66 Windows 3.1 or better 16MB RAM 28MB hard-drive space. SVGA graphics 2x CD ROM; supports Windows-compatible sound cards 3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: Hotseat (1-3 players). Designer: Jellyvision Publisher: Berkeley Systems Berkeley, CA (510) 540-5535 www.berkeleysystems.com

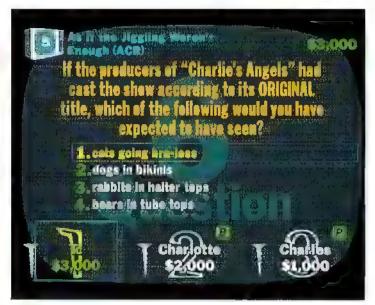
I DON'T KNOW, JACK

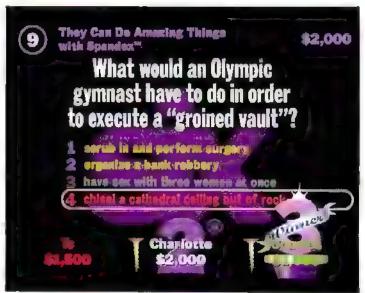
Another possibility is that the authorie with JACK. I know that after watching Jeopardy every right for a week, I greet a new episode with somewhat less enthusiasm than I do when I've been away from my TV for a while. Computer gamers have been getting a steady diet of JACK.

for about two years now one could hardly blame them if they were getting a little tired of it. Was Shakespeare writing about JACK when he said, "Play on give me excess of it, that, surfeiting, the appelite may stoken, and so

die Enough, no more; 'hs not so sweet now as it was before''? Well, not really, but he might as well have been.

What's there to tire of Cheeky inpuendo, for one thing Sexual double entendres need not be sophisticated,





FROM SPANDEX TO PLAYTEX Both games are risque, but you'll find Jack 3 funnier than Jack TV.

but they do need to be pulled off with a certain elegance - otherwise, you're really dealing with single entendre, as in JACK 3's new "Three Way" questions, with their orgasmic background sounds ("Oh, yes!") and forced sex gags ("Looks like we've reached our climas") Crossout gags are also getting tiring. All the JACK games end with parody commercials, but where the first game had some brilliant satiric gems (two years later, I still chuckle over the "Flealth food store boy doll" jingle), JACK 3 and JACK TV club you over the head with ads for a "unnation pad for men," a 'IV special called When Dogs Sniff Crotches 2, and a food product called "Splat; Spreadable Laps, Anuses, and Teats."

Am I selecting the most extreme examples? Of course I am, and I don't want to be unfair. The average level of the humor is not quite as low as these examples might suggest, though JACK 3 comes off much better— and furnier—in this regard than does JACK TV

DIS OR DAT?

Cameplay is the same as in previous installments. For the handful of you who have never played JACK, this means that a snide offsereen host reads imiltiplechoice questions out loud and one, two, or three players race to buzz in and select answers. Players win points for answering correctly and lose points for making mistakes. Play is divided into three rounds, including a finale (the "Jack" Attack") in which you have to match pairs of clues that embody some special relationship. Periodically, unusual types of questions crop up, including "Dis or Dat" questions, in which you have to indicate into which of two categories a series of clues falls ("Dangerous gas or shampoo?"); "Impossible Questions," In which you have to guess at a piece of information you couldn't possibly know ("How many dollars did Smokey and the Bandit gross by 1993?"), and the everpopular "Gibberish Questions," in which you have to translate a meaningless phrase into the familiar phrase with which it thymes.

Questions can be on any topic in JACK 3; in JACK TV, all the questions are about television shows, with a particular emphasis on cheesy genre shows and sixcoms of the 1970s. Your success at the latter will be greater if you know that the

Don't Know (Union) Jack aglephiles, keep your eyes peeled for the UK version of You Bon't Knew Jack, at hilarious adaptation of Berkeley» Systems' original game. Translated into the Queen's English for the benefit of our falls cousins across the pond, the questions cover every ureat British institution from Are You! Being Served? to Absolutely Fabulous, with a healthy dose of Beatlemania thrown in a While a knowledge of both Cockney rhyming slang and British seap eners characters weuth certainly fare yeu well in this game, even un-Anglicized Yanks should be able 📦 held their own, as many of the questions are general knowledge. The main difference is that the smart-mouthed announces, Jack Cake, and the rest of his cronies all kaws july old British accounts. But the prodict he warned: Much of the language is even more risqué than in any of the American versions—you know what a hawdy let these Brits arely Charlotte Panther

Bionle Woman was a tennis pro before she became bionic and that Archie Bunker once called 'Iwinkies "WASP soul food." But, as with JACK SPORTS (in which most of the questions could be enjoyed by people who were not sports fauatics), JACK TV is not particularly nasty or relentless in the minutiae it asks you to recall.

JACK TV has a different host from JACK 3, and the change is anything but an improvement. Fils voice is more grating and his jokes are noticeably lame. (After a question about Trapper John's surgeon sidekick, Gonzo, the announcer quips "A Muppet doing surgery. Oh, man, I can see the malpractice suit from here." After a question about the eagle on Wonder Woman's costume, he wryly says. "I stared at her chest plenty and I never noticed no eagle.")

To be fair, some of the animation sequences that introduce each question in JACK TV include very funny parodies of TV theme sougs and catchphrases: a Herve Villechaize imitator shouting "Thir-Teen! Thir-Teen!" à la Fantasy Island, for instance

In a world that had never known JACK, both JACK 3 and JACK TV would probably be harled as successes. Alas, we know (and we've played) better, JACK 3 is the more inspired of the two games, and is well worth the purchase despite being

overproduced, JACK TV has its moments, but if you're expecting another change of pace—such as with JACK MOVIES—you'll likely be disappointed. Maybe by the time JACK 4 rolls around, the waters will have some fresh ideas. We can only hope.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK 3

PAPPEAL: For those who enjoyed the first You Don't Know Jack.

▶PROS: Hundreds of new questions and answers, presented in that irresistibly silly and sassy Jack style; snazzy new graphics.

PCONS: Not quite as funny or clever as Jack or Jack 2; the writers and the audience may be getting a little tired by now.



YOU DON'T KNOW IACH TY

▶APPEAL: For Jack addicts who must have the entire collection.

PROS: A new angle from the more general Jack trivia; some of the animation is neat.

PCONS: Nowhere near the send-up of pop culture in Jack Movies; the graphics are often lackluster, where's our favorite host?



There's a little geek in all of us.



introducing ZDTV, the first 24-hour computer channel and integrated website, coming in spring 1998. Go to www.zdtv.com for a sneek preview, and let us know what you think. If we like your ideas, we might even give you your own show. How's that for interactive?

Garman

Novell, ORACLE

Pick a Card

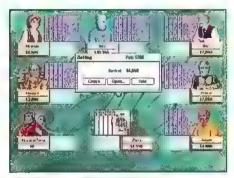
by Barry Brenesal

ow that the holidays have passed, you may be wondering what to do with that leftover fruitcake from Aunt Ida You might feel the same about the perennial gaggle of parlor games ported to the PC. It's not that HOYLE CLASSIC CARD GAMES lacks the usual Sierra polish, it's just that there isn't much else here.

Gone are the computerdriven opponents drawn from Sierra's past graphics adventures. (I miss Baba Yaga.) They've been replaced by a slate of new figures - from a lawyer named Langley to an anthropomorphized robot named Primus. You'll find a spate of familiar card games among the 12 game selections in the package. But computer versions of Bridge and Poker have been done far better elsewhere, and there are a

number of good shareware versions of 1-learts available on the Internet — for a lot less money.

Of course, the real fun of card games comes from social interaction; that's why Aunt Ida dons her green visor and plays poker with the boys every Toesday night. This multiplayer camanidene is completely missing from the HOYLE CLASSIC



CARD SHARKS These computer players look unique, but their canned responses quickly wear thin.

CARD GAMES. Attempts to simulate this

interaction backfire - after a character responds with identically inflected remarks the 15th time, you begin to feel as if your nose is being shoved inside the desiccated programming code of the game

You may not want to offend your Aunt Ida by sending back that fruitcake, but you can certainly turn down this halfbaked fruitcake of a game. S

APPEAL: For those who feel shuffling real cards takes too much

PROS: Simple interface; familiar games: nice doc-

umentation. **PCONS:** There are much better computer card







Price: \$29,95 System Requirements: 486/66 Windows 3.1 or better, BM8 RAM, 6MB harddrive space, 2x CD-ROM drive: supports Windowscompatible sound cards.

3D Support: None. Multiplayer Support: Only through Sierra Internet Gaming Service (2-4 players), 1 CD per

Publisher: Slerra On-Line Bellevue, WA (800) 757-7707 www.sierra.com

PICTIONARY • REVIEW

price.

Drawing a Blank

by Charlotte Panther

s I am a huge fan of the Pictionary board game, I was eagerly awaiting Husbro's digital version. Despite the participation of the original designters, however, PictionARY does not come close to the standard of its penciland-paper cousin. The game is played via six categories, four of which involve figur-

WALKING THE PLANK The most amusing part of Pictionary comes from watching your friends compose their crazy creations with the mouse.

ing out what the computer is drawing, or guessing at a hidden image before all of its parts are revealed. There's also a fastbuzzer round, during which you must match up words and pictures as they glide past you on a conveyor belt

Most of the games require you to buzz in and type the first three letters of the

> answer - if you're correct, the rest of the word will register automatically With the phrase "ear to the ground," for example, I typed "ear" and the game credited me with getting the whole phrase correct. This feature removes all the tension that arises from getting some of the clue right and struggling to figure out the whole thing-which is an intrinsic part of what made the ongmal Pictionary fun.

In general, the games in PICHONARY are fairly unremarkable Only You Draw-

where you must draw pictures using your mouse as a pencil -is really reminiscent of the original. Watching friends' attempts to draw masterpieces with the mouse had its moments, but I found myself missing the boardgame. Some classics are better enjoyed in their original mearnation. %

APPEAL: Only for those who assume that digital must be better than paper.

PROS: Watching friends drawing pathetic pictures with the mouse will

make you chuckle.

COMS: Too easy; only one of the slx games resembles the boardgame.





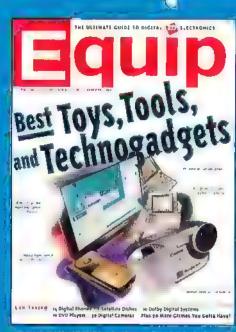
Price: \$29 99 System Requirements: 486/66, Windows 95, 12MB RAM, 40MB hard-drive space, 2x CO-ROM. supports Windowscompatible sound cards.

39 Support: Nane. Multiplayer support: 1-3 individual players or two teams, Internet, LAN, or Hotseat, 1 CD per player. Publisher: Hasbro Interactive Beverly, Massachusetts (508) 921-3700

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Going Underground

ZORK GRAND INQUISITOR IS A HUMOROUS Journey Through Adventure Gaming's Past

ORK CRAND NOUSTTOR is the latest revival in the ZORK series from Activision Once again, we visit the Great Underground Empire (or what's left of it), includ-

ing nostalgie stops at Flood Control Dam #3 and the legendary White I fouse 'This isn't just a trip down memory lane, of course; there is also a nefartous plot to foil.

The Inquisitor (of the title) is behind it all. His goal is to completely endicate magic, while at the same time ensure that the population bows in total, mindnumbing obedience to his orders. He is, obviously, not a nice guy

While the game begins in Port Foozle, you quickly end up in the G.U.E., where most of the action takes place. It's here that you find the last bit



DAM IT Harking back all the way to Zork I, you'll have to figure out the controls to Flood Control Dam #3 as you make your way through Zork GRAND INQUISITOR.

of magical power and use it, plus your wits, to stop the Inquisitor before his plans come to fruition.

You must bring magic back into the world by retrieving three potent artifacts: the fabled Coconut of Quendor, the Cube of Foundation, and the Skull of Yoruck (not to be found in just any old hamlet). In other words, it's the usual hero's quest shuff.

HELL TO PAY

You don't go this one alone; there are companions of sorts to help you along. One is the spirit of the last Dungeon Master, who currently resides in the famous brass lautern. Three other spirits trapped in totems (a form of punishment) also provide assistance, along with Anthana Jack, a grand

Over the course of the game, you pay a visit to Flades, meet a two-headed Cerberus (even I lell is downsizing these days), traipse through time tunnels, ride the G.U.E. subway, spend some time in a dragon's mouth, and perform a daring jail break, among other feats.

The mood here is definitely light, and while the underlying threat is, of course, senous, ZORK CRAND INQUISITOR is played for laughs. There are send-ups and takeoffs on standard adventure fare, and other things as well. If Authoria Jack seems somehow suspiciously familiar, that's deliberate. He may not have raided any arks or found any grads, but you probably know him

In tandem with the humor, the puzzles are fairly easy to solve. Where the previous game, ZORK NEMESIS, had a lot of tough nuts to crack, ZCI's posers often have obvious answers. While there were some theky parts, I was a bit surprised at how quickly the game was



game is a lighthearted romp, full of humor and wicked little jabs at adventuring.



Price: \$49.95 System Requirements: Pentium 90 Windows 95 16MB RAM 50MB hard-drive space, 4x GD-ROM drive 16bit 640x480 graphics with a VESA local bus of PCI video card with 1MB RAM, Sound Blaster 16-compatible sound card, mouse, 28.8Kbps modem for multiplayer option 3D Support: None **Multiplayer Support:** Modern, LAN, or Internet (2 players); 1CD per player Designer/Publisher: Activ-sion

Santa Monica CA

www.activision.com

(310) 255-2000



SPELL RELIEF The G U E spellchecker-no mage should be without one

finished, even though there is much for you to do.

As with most adventure games these days, the interfage is simple. When you move the cursor over an interactive object-a lever to pull, a button to push, or a door to open - you click the mouse to perform the appropriate action. When the cursor is over an item you can take, the arrow becomes a hand; and you pick up the item by clicking. You can then try using it on something else, or you can put it into your inventory bag. You access the bag in one of two ways. Use a hot key (F5), which displays everything you're carrying, or move the cursor to the top left of the screen, which opens a sliding bar displaying the first 16 items you have in the bag.

Spells are handled the same way. You can open the spellbook from inside the inventory bag or move the cursor to the top right to open a slide bar with symbols representing the spells in your book. Clicking a symbol readies the spell for easting. The spells you learn, by the way, are automatically written in the book as you find them

Movement is sumfar to that in ZORK NEMESIS: while you can rotate 360 degrees or look up and down (sometimes), you can move only in certain predetermined directions.

The game contains no automap; the closest thing to one is a magical map that works with the teleport machines scattered around the G.U.E. Once you have visited a main location (such as the Dungeon Master's Lair or G.U.E. Tech), it appears on the map. Insert the map in a teleporter and choose a destination,

and you're taken there instantly That's more than sufficient. Although the main areas usually have several rooms each, the locations are small and you can't become lost or confused. The G.U.E. is a rather compact place.

YOUR TURN?

ZGI is presented in a letterbox style, and when it comes to graphics, the game is quite good. The middle portion of the screen is the main display; the top (controls and scroll bars) and bottom (text display) portions are black.

Speaking of text, the game has

to stop by Activision's Web site (www.activision.com) to check for updates before trying this yourself.

The game itself, though, ran beautifully throughout, with no crashes, freezes, lockups, or other addities. It all went very smoothly, including the FMVs. You do need DirectX 5.0, and it's included (along with a number of updated sound and video drivers) on the CD. The installation of DirectX and the new drivers for my eards proved to be quick and implie-free.

The acting and voice-overs are very good, Dirk Benedict (as Antharia Jack) is



YOUR MOVE? Don't worry—this is not an outlake from THE 7TH GUEST. Think of what you've ever felt like doing with an adventure game chess puzzle, and act accordingly.

complete subfitles. You can play with sound or sound and text. That includes the FMVs that run from time to time during the game — a thoughtful touch. It's good to see that ZORK hasn't forgotten its roots.

Interestingly, ZGI supports multiplay for two people via LAN, Internet, or modern connections. The play is, of course, cooperative, since GRAND

lnQUISTOR isn't exactly a shooter Sorry to say, I didn't have the chance to try this feature, so I can't tell you how well it works (although my editors tell me that it's less than stellar). Also, the multiplayer software that comes with the game is labeled as a beta version, so you may want

a standout; he's amazing as an ersatz ludiana Jones. The advantage of doing a humorous game is that actors can hanniup, and you can be sure that everyone lakes advantage of the opportunity here. While the use of live actors in games often comes off poorly, in this case, it works out well.

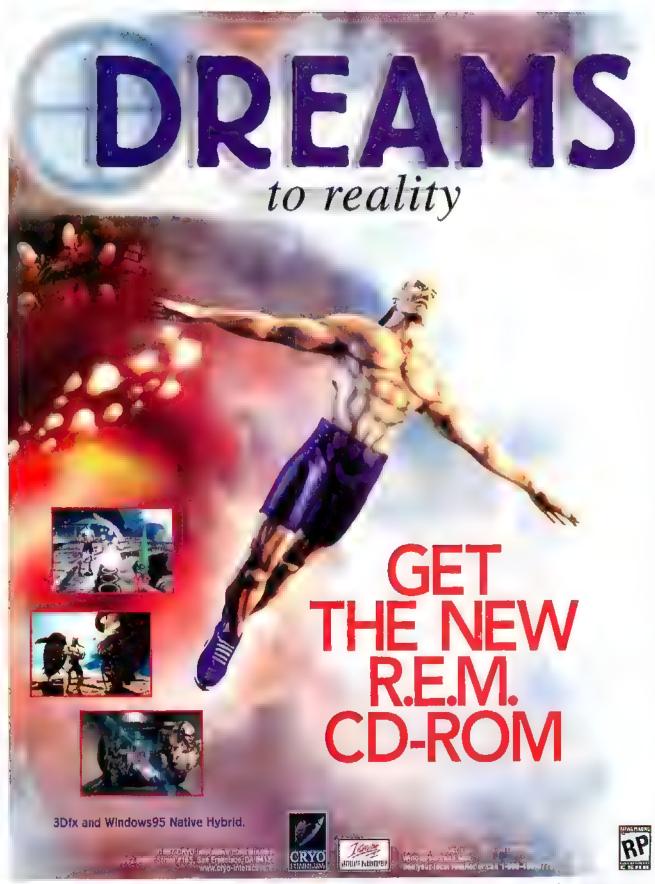
YOU HAVE DIED

The downsides to the game are that it goes no quickly and the puzzles are just a little too simple most of the time. I suppose this is a reaction to complaints that NEMESIS was overly difficult. In correcting for that, however, Activision went a bit too far in the other direction.

Overall, ZORK GRAND INQUISTIOR is a lighthearted romp, full of humor and wicked little (abs at adventuring. While it's a little too short and a little too easy, the game is nonetheless fun for both veterans and novices alike §



OPEN HOUSE The White House, one of computer gaming's most famous landmarks, makes a return appearance in ZORK GRAND INDUISIOR



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POLICE THE LESS CHICAGO, Factor and Mote

Of Mice and MNF

Thanks to Some Mickey Mouse Decision-Making, OT Sports Is Dead



he news bit me like a Reggie White sack There I am, enjoying MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL 98 as much as any sports game

I've played all year. Even after sending my review to CCW Sports Editor Jeff Green for the monthly red pen therapy, I can't seem to put MNF aside. I realize I'm hooked because I've even signed up with an Internet league, something I almost never find time for In the league, I'm coaching the Eagles and loving It, despite weekly poundings by online opponents who take sadistic pleasure in my red-zone blues.

And then one day i'm cruising the newsgroups, where I stumble across an anonymous message claiming that MNF 98 has been orphaned, and the staff pink-shpped. Could Disney, the original corporate eash cow, really have

pulled the plug on a promising company such as OT Sports?

No way, I think. The game is great. It has the tie-in with the popular Gifford-Dierdorf-Michaels prime-time NFL coverage. And gauging from the Net traffic, sales are way up from the game's lukewarm debut in 1996. Besides, we've been through this before with Usenet impostors claiming the inside scoop.

THE BLOODY TRUTH

The next day, however, MNF designer Doug Whatley's wife posted a follow-up indicating that OT Sports was indeed bleeding out, but that the game would be supported through the end of the season Say it ain't sof Appearing on the scene just as the LEGENDS 98 debacle was leaving sports gamers squealing like Ned Beatty in Deliverance, MNF 98 filled a major void in this year's football lineup. After all, a good-looking NFL game with realistic strategy options, a dirt-simple play-calling interface, and smooth Internet play is nothing to sneeze at. So what has Mickey been smoking lately?

Despite a round of layoffs that left a skeleton crew in charge at OT Sports, General Manager Deborah Wahler remains upbeat.

"This was primarily a decision by Disney Interactive," Wahler says. "They took a look at their business and decided their core competencies were not necessarily in sports.

"Without critical mass in this business it's very hard to compete," Wahler laments. "EA owns the sports category. Strategically we were a very small business entity—30 people—and far removed from where Disney's resource base could help us. A lot of businesses reevaluate. I think Disney reevaluated."

Despite the sacking of OT Sports, Wahler gives assurances that Disney will continue to support MNF 98 and its college cousin, HEROES OF THE CRIDIRON, through their natural life cycle. She also confirmed that INDY RACING would be released as planned in time for the Christmas shopping season, where it will be going wheel-to-wheel with Microsofts CART PRECISION RACING.

SOMS CART PRECISION BARELY BREATHING

So, is this the end of OT Sports as we know it? Unfortunately, yes:

"As far as Disney is concerned it is the end of OT as an entity," Wahler confirms. "There are some things that may happen for it to survive, but not under Disney ownership. If Disney decides to sell its assets then OT Sports may indeed live." (The assets Wahler refers to include the MNI* 98 game engine, the INDY RACING engine, and related trademarks.)

Meanwhile, at OT Sports' Hunt Valley, Maryland offices, a small, handpicked team—including MNI^{*} designer Doug Whatley and producer Russell



yes.



FOUR AND OUT? MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL 98's strong sales and better reviews may help keep it afloat despite OT Sports' demise.



FORGOTTEN HEROES OT Sports' college football game is a decent variation on the Monday Night Football engine, but, due to a lack of support, if has barely registered in the polis

Clark — remain behind to complete INDY RACING and provide support for MINE and LIBROES. A transition team from Disney is also in place

What's next for talented sports game designer Doug Whatley? He was responsible for the underrated ULIMAD. FOOTBALL series while at MicroProse, and historically has been the most accessible of sports game personas, readily available to gamers' gripes and questions. Deborah Wahler predicts a bright future for MNF 98's creator.

"Doug and Russell Clark are so talented that they really can determine their own fate. A lot of people see ownership as an interesting way to go. I believe Doug's probably thinking in those terms. He's got a great rep, and he's been around football and had some nice snecess."

Okay, so OT Sports is dead in the water. What about MINF 98, a game that really came of age this season? Is it destined to become computer gaming's version of the athlete dying young?

"I really don't know," Wahler says. "In the interactive business the first year is really tough. By year two you've worked out a lot of the kinks. You get a better product, and it just improves from there I think ABC and Disney both agree that, as a franchise, Monday Night Football is preeminent, whether it's on the air or on your sweatshirt or on your computer I don't think they'll walk away from it"

GO IT ALONE?

Other sources close to the OT Sports situation speculate that Whatley might attempt to purchase the rights to the game from Disney and continue the franchise aidependently. This might not be a bad deal, since the game is gaining a popular following. Wahler points to figures indicating that MNF 98 sales were up 65 percent over last year's version in the

first two weeks. She also pointed out that the MNF gaming lobby on Mplayer has been quite active.

Pat Vance, a vice president at ABC Interactive, remains supportive of the OT Sports line of games and, like Wahler, frames the unfortunate situation in economic terms.

"There's consolidation going on here as there is all across the industry," Vance

Microsoft's racing sim. As for MNF, Vance expects it to survive the financial mousetrap that snared OT Sports.

"If MNF is successful this year," Vance says, "I don't think there's any question that it will be back. There's absolutely no reason to keep it away. We have a very solid engine, and if the market receives it well, there's no reason to hold it off."

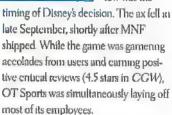
SCROOGE MCDUCK

As one might imagine, the OT Sports situation has spawned some hard feelings. One former staffer slams Disney Interactive for major cost overruns on its edutainment products — overruns that necessitated the very cost-cutting measures that proved fatal to OT Sports. A lack of gamers in key management positions at Disney Interactive is another criticism leveled in the wake of OTs densise.

"Disney doesn't understand the unique quality of interactive entertainment," our source remarks pointedly.

> "And they don't want to spend money in a market they don't understand."

Perhaps the most bitter pilt for members of the ABC Interactive and OT Sports teams to swallow was the



Since OT Sports seems to have reached a sudden-death finale worthy of its name, the only thing left to do is to join in a little ditty in honor of its flagship product, MNF 98. C'mon, you know the words.

M-I-C. .See you real soon! (we hope) K-E-Y...Why? Because we LIKE you!



WIPEOUT! This unfortunate scene from INOV RACING serves as a sad metaphor for the fate of the game's developer, OT Sports.

says. "We have three very strong sports games this fall, which will continue to be supported. We did do some downsizing. We're gauging the market at this point, and expect that the products are going to be successful this Christmas. We expect to carry at least certain games forward in the future.

"MNF is doing very well," Vance adds. "It's way outperforming what it had done last year at this point in time." Vance also expects HEROES OF 111F GRIDIRON to be a solid contender among college fans, and looks for a keen competition between INDY RACING and

The rambility,

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Money for Nothing

Or, Why the PGL Heralds the End of the World



trst off, I must admit that I have watched beach volleyball on television. The reasons, I think, are obvious. I bring this up only because the Los Angeles Times, a fine metropolitan

newspaper, saw fit in a recent article to compare niche sports like beach volley-ball with the brand-new Professional Gamers' League (PGL), a harebrained scheme by Total Entertainment Network (TEN) to turn gaming into some kind of "professional" sport, complete with product endorsements and trading cards. The PGL already has its Michael Jordan in Dennis "Thresh" Fong, a 20-year-old who has gamered media attention, won a Ferrari, and now has an agent, all because he kicks butt in QUAKE.

But I don't know Sure, it sounds great, and I guess I'd take that Ferrari over my dented 1990 Nissan with the unidentifiable brown stain on the pas senger seat. Still, I just can't help feeling that—with all due respect to the hardworking people putting it together—the PGL is one huge case of wishful thinking. Sort of like my fantasy of John Tesh spontaneously combusting

Now I'm not opposed to gaming tournaments. Nor am I opposed to making moncy from gaming. In fact, I hope that Ziff-Davis someday pays the CCW chitors enough so that I, too, can say I "make money" from gaming.

But there's a large difference between watching professional athletes perform feats of athletic provess and watching a bunch of zombied-out, bug-eyed gamers frag each other to death. Who do they think would actually be interested in watching this stuff, buying PGL T-shirts, or (and this is truly pathetic) swapping PGL trading eards?

I know it seems as if people will pay money for anything, Lots of people attend tractor pulls and the ice Capades and professional bowling tournaments-and that's fine. You won't see me making any snobbish put-downs about the hayseeds and yokels who spend their money on that cultural backwash. I know it's also true that gamers tend to be easily suckered into spending lots of eash on really stupid, money-wasting stuff. But even those of us who own plastic Ferengl cars (hr Denny!) will attest to having some semblance of pride. And paying to watch other people play QUAKE is a line that we as a species cannot afford to cross.

Finally—and maybe this is just the dad in me speaking—it seems to me that even worse than the cultural implications is the nightmansh idea that some impressionable young gamer is going to look at this league and think that gaming could actually be a wise career choice.

Look, kids, let me give it to you straight. If you're even remotely thinking about quitting school to "be like Thresh" and become a "professional gamer," I suggest you shine a flashlight in your car and see if any light comes out the other side. Because, to put it in terms you might understand, you're a few damage points shy of a frag.

Yes, Thresh won a Ferran. Yes, he did it by playing QUAKE. Yes, he has an agent now. But that doesn't
mean you're going to get
the same kind of break, no
matter how big a badass you are.
Chances are you'll just get carpal tunnel
syndrome, a bad back, and a lifelong
addiction to Taco Bell

And don't kid yourself into thinking that you're missing out on some sort of glamorous lifestyle, either. As someone who's on the inside, let me tell you, the gaming life is not all just good times, parties, and multiplayer naked DIABLO with Tia Carrere, Believe me, that gets old really fast, and Tia is insufferably whiny when she gets low on mana.

Tiy this vision on for size instead: You, alone in your apartment, your hairy gut flopping out of your macaroni-and-cheese-stained DOOM IT shirt, shouting, "I'm the King of QUAKE!" while the repo guys haul away your furniture. And your girlfriend? Well, fragmaster, guess what: She just drove off in a Porsche 911 with her new boyfriend—the one with the education and the job and the bulging stock portfoho.

Get the picture? Good. The Professional Camers' League is not for you. Get it out of your head. When you say PGL to me, let me retranslate it for you as follows: Please Get a Life.

Now you kids get out a here and go do your homework. I'm busy playing QUAKF II here. Papa's got a Ferrart to win. §

What Jeff doesn't realize is that, beginning next month, CGW will be switching its focus to cover other forms of popular entertainment. You can email our new tractor pull and Ice Capades editor at jhgreen@zd.com.

The gaming life is not all just good times, parties, and multiplayer naked DIABLO with Tia Carrere.
Believe me, that gets old really fast.

Other Gentles Would fock-bottom fate The #1 Computer Game Magazine 5 Free Issues! **Save 42%** \$27_94— One year/12 issues. Like getting 5 issues FREE! Save 48% \$49.97 Two years/24 issues. Like getting 11 issues FREE

Going for the Gold

Updated Versions Breathe New Life Into Older Sims



Support

for Voodoo

JETFIGHTER III

a completely

different

feel.

graphics

gives



t's been years since I've seen a significant flight simplator that didn't get at least one patch after its release. At times, the need for patches is mexcusable. For example, many developers rush products out the door -knowing that the games

contain major problems—in order to release before the holiday sales season or the end of a financial quarter. Other games need patches because the developers skimped on the testing budget and didn't test the games with common system configurations or a popular 3D eard, it's a shame how many programs

are released in poor shape because of shortsighted, beancounter decisions.

But sometimes a company will modify a program to extend its life and add new capabilities in order to keep the game interesting for veteran gamers while making it attractive for newcomers. For some titles, such as U.S.

NAVY FIGHTERS 97, these updates are sold as a new version of the program, with a cost-reduced upgrade or rebate available for purchasers of the original version. This is also the case for major updates of FINING CORPS GOLD and BEFEGIFIER III PLATINUM EDITION, But in both of these cases, the developers went a step further They also released many of the enhancements of the newer versions as free patches for purchasers of the original programs. These are the kinds of patches gamers like to see.

DIGGING GOLD

Since its release, FIMING CORPS has seen a number of enhancements. including Direct3D graphics and, more recently, multiplayer support. For some reason, these patches weren't available at press time from publisher Empire's Web site (www.empire-us.com), but you can get them from the game's developer, Rowan, at www.cfx.co.uk/~rowan or ftp://ftp.u-net.com/com/rowan/.

possible to maintain about 30 frames per second in 640x480 mode on a Pentium 166. If you have a faster system and a 3D card with a big enough frame buffer (such as the RIVA I28), you can get satisfactory performance even at 800x600 resolution.

In addition to being faster, the graphics look better as well. Flatner CORPS now uses 16-bit color, which makes haze and other effects more impressive, and the game supports bilinear filtering to smooth out ground textures at low altitude. Note that you'll need a high-end 3D card to take advantage of the 3D mode. It looks and works great on Rendition V2200-, 3Dfx Voodoo-, and NVIDIA REVA 128based eards, but won't function on an AIT

> All-in-Wonder or S3 Virge-based Diamond Stealth card.

Also new is a multiplayer mode, but the developers weren't as successful with this implementation. While it works well on a LAN or via a direct modem dialup, l was unsuccessful

connecting using the Internet TCP/IP support or KALL Apparently, you can play online using Wireplay, a non-Internet multiplayer service that is offered in the UK and is currently being launched in the U.S. by MCI, Rowan PP Continued on pg 247

LOW AND SLOW Low-level flight is smoother and a lot better looking with the Flying Corps 3D update.

Of course, the most noticeable enhancement to FLYING CORPS is its new support for 3D graphics. When FIATING CORPS was released last year, you had to run the DOS version to get decent frame-rates at higher graphics resolutions. With the new 3D support, it's

CGW

GANIER'S EDGE

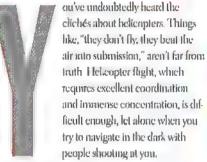
Your Source for Ruthless Strategies, Tips, Cheats, and Hacks

STRATECY & TIPS

Longbow 2

Helicopter Survival Guide, Part 1: Flight Tactics

by Tom "KC" Basham



Fortunately, there are things you can do to maximize your combat proficiency



While coffee-table books and cable TV programs anay proclaim that the AH-64 Longbow Apache can move well over 180mph, such high

> speeds cause problems. Low altitude flight at breakneck speed is more dangerous, the enemy can more easily detect you, and it's harder to use terrain masking. If you're running for your life, speed is good. In most cases, though, there's no good reason to ever

take an Apache above 60 knots or so.

The most common way to gain unwanted speed in LONGBOW 2 is to let your nose get buried. Pointing the nose downward tilts the disc of the rotor blades, which points the thrust back, eausing the helicopter to accelerate. If not properly trimmed, the nose of the simulated AH-64 tends to slowly sink below the honzon. If I'm not paying close attention, the nose can drop several degrees and the helicopter can pick up 30 or 40 extra knots of speed before I notice, It's also easy for sim tocks transitioning from fixed-wing aircraft to let the nose drop - or sometimes push it down intentionally - when crossing ridges. If you work the collective properly, you can ascend, crest the ridge, and descend on the other side with few adjustments to your flight attitude. Once you've picked up unwanted speed, you've got problems. LONGBOW 2's aircraft don't serub off speed as quickly as their real-world counterparts. Although the simulated choppers pick up speed quickly with the nose below the horizon, they don't want to slow down after raising the nose an equal distance above the horizon





SPEED RACER Burying the nose results in sudden, unwanted acceleration.

The best way to get rid of unwanted speed is to pay close attention to the machine and never let the speed build up in the first place. If you find yourself zipping along at 90 knots, you'll have to do some aggressive maneuvering to serub off that extra speed. Pitch the nose up very high, well above the horizon. In some cases if t find myself moving unreasonably fast, I'll pitch the nose up and apply collective. Increasing collective increases thrust, which is diverted forward because the nose is pulled above the horizon. The extra thrust helps slow the helicopter down, but will also cause it to

climb. (And we all know that altitude is a bad thing when flying gunships.) If you lower the collective, you'll descend, but you won't decelerate as fast.



RIDGE RUNNING Flying along the top of the ndge provides a quick escape route into the next valley.

Three-Ring Circus

elicopters can esecute a variety of maneuvers including combackward and aldeway. These even merely current designed
to ave airshow growds, instead, such antics form a crucial
part of helicopter warfare. If you can't use the rain massing, if you can't use the rain massing.

In you can't use the rain massing if you can't use the rain massing in you can't use the rain massing.

Sideways slight and these difficult. To practice that my preview Gamily ith difficient shower blaing the pedale, year the surgrant until facet in the discretion is building, among a rent like. More toward that structure until you are only as few hundred from every than a enter a hover to allow or the definition of the significant and the structure of the significant and the significant

inyouthave come to were mouse, to inter-cessime, a price more involved. If the helicopter starts auraina, you have to como sate with the pedals. Suppose you're behind a hill. You want to slide left, unmask, incommissingers, norther our fername slide left, you want to slide left, you want to keep the first pointed treate the man.

you can fire your weapons as quickly as possible if the mose begins to bunk around atthe disorton simply apply the opposite padal to nose will swing back to the original bearing



We all know that attack belieopters rely on termin masking, the act of placing termin features between you and the enemy. A cooperative hill, mountain, or even tree can keep you alive simply by blocking the enemy's view. In most cases, the enemy can't shoot what he can't see 'Therefore, when transiting rough terrain, it would seem logical to use the geography to its fulfest potential and fly along the bottom of the valleys. The canyon walls form a nearly impregnable barner of defense, right? Not exactly

Suppose you're flying over very rough termin toward a particular target. The numerous hills and ridges provide several green and inviting valleys to choose from. If you're like me, it won't matter how good the initial reports are, whichever valley you choose will be overflowing with enemy forces. You'll come around some bend to find yourself deluged with shoulder-launched SAMs and AAA. If you're flying along the floor right down the center of the canyon and find yourself in this situation, you might as well be in the middle of a Kansas wheat field. You're stuck an absolutely the least protected spot within the valley.

Real-world AH-64 pilots are taught to fly along the top of a ridge, just below the ridge line. A few feet of mountain blocks sight just as well as several hundred, with an extra benefit: If the current valley becomes too hot, you simply apply some collective, kick in some pedal, and cruise over the ridge into the next valley. With a few tons of rock between you and the enemy, you can resume your course.

Next month: Using your Longbow's muscle. &



HIT THE SRAKES Since the simulated AH-64 doesn't bleed speed very well, be sure to pull the nose well above the horizon to decelerate.

Unleashing Hellfire Upon Your Enemies

accepts several guidence packages, including an imaging infrared (III) sector, a Radio Proquency/III secker, and a millimeter-wave peaker. Capable of menouvering at 13g's at expensent speed, the missile rine several lounch modes which depend on the secker type, the types of electroles present, and the purples of arallable designators.

When using Lock-On Before Launch (LBBL) to target weapons in an excircument with multiple designators, the missile can be ripple fired at multiple forgets (each marked by a different lacer designator) at one second intervals, in a single-designator environment, the missile may be repla-fired at different largets about every eight seconds.

Using Lock-On After Launch (LIDL) mode, the missile will either clear high (LBAL-N) on law (LBAL-L) electrons while speking the coded local heating and the locking on, the missile allow and strikes the target.



STRATECY & TIPS

Jedi Knight

Uncover the Valley's Secrets in Part II of Our Tip Guide



DARK TIMES AHEAD. When you're walking through this tunnel, use a light so you can see that small alcove up on your left

by Thierry Nguyen

ast month, we took you through eight levels on the first disc of JEDI KNIGHT and showed you how to build up your reserve of Force Stars. This issue, we take you through all the secrets of the second disc, so that by the time you meet Jerec,

you'll be a Jedi Lord with the full fury of the Force on your side.

9: Fuel Station Launch

Secret One: Near the beginning of this level, you'll have to get by a large pipe. Before you jump down from the pipe, walk along the edge to the right. There, you'll find the level's first secret

Secret Two: After getting the yellow key, you'll start the fuel-tank puzzle. Use the key to open the door, walk down to the left side, and Force Jump to the top of the bunker at the end of the ledge.

Secret Three: In the banker, there is a

12: Escape with the Map

Sares. As you get off the elevator there should be a couple of large praise. Belief the elevator, there should be a couple of large praise. Belief these crates is a select room.

Secret him: Take the conveyor belt to its destination; the room filled with large better. Make your way to the upper level; take out the santry gun; in the coding, and look for an alreve across the way. Force Jump to it.

Scient Three Near Secret Two is a cubbylede set topo a wall, a rusty grate covers it. Make your way to the grate and alloc it open with your lightsabor.

Scoret Four. Near the elevator, yes one are a large crain near a small. Squeeze into the area between the prate and the wall and look for a breakable section of the crain. Out it spen with year lights abor and go in.





BUNKER HOPPING Just before you enter this bunker in Level 9, be sure to use Force Jump to get to the top and grab some items.

turbolift that drops down. Take the lift, and when you exit, look up and to the left You should see a small cubbyhole, jumping into this hole leads to a secret.

Secret Four: As you solve the fuel-tank pazzle, you'll enter a crawl space (just before the wrench) filled with ugnaughts. Find the door in the middle level of this area, turn on your light, and look toward the upper left for another cubbyhole.

Secret Five: Once you solve the fuel-tank puzzle, you'll take an elevator down.

Stay on it for the return trip back up. After it reaches the floor you came from, it will move up another level to a secret area.

Secret Six: Near Secret Five is a morn with a few barrels in the corner Jump on top of them and make your way to the cubbyhole cear the top of the wall.

Secret Seven: After nabbing Secret Six, go back down and destroy those barrels to uncover another cubbyhole

Secret Eight: Destroy all six defense cannons and then blow up the wall that's opposite the door

Secret Nine: Move to the right from Secret Eight and jump over the large pipe on your right. After walking along the wall, you should find yourself in a little hole.

Secret Ten: When you reach the end of the tunnels, turn on your light. Go under the overhang. Look up and to the left to find a small alcove tucked away.

17: The Valley Tower Ascent

Secret The: After entering the main building and peing up the elevator, you'll be in a room that has two large fuel tanks in a corner. Destroy the fuel tanks to uncover the hallway hidden behind them.

Secret Two: The next secret is in the gravity-lift area with the green light. If you turn on the lift, you can ride the crates up to the top ledge, where the secret lies. If you didn't turn it on, you'll need to hop across some ledges in order to make your way to the top.

Secret Three: You'll reach a wind tunnel that nermally pushes you off the cutwalk and into a conjuntile area. With proper timing and use of Force Speed, you can make your way to the bace of the tunnel and into Secret Times.

Secret Four: After moving from the large wind funnel into the carrier, you should enter a reem filled with fuel tanks. Decirey these fuel tanks to messer the hole hidden in the fleer.

Secret Five: There is one last wind tunnel that shoets you upwent to your final objective. As you like through the wind tunnel, try to move forward so that you stop in the mideoction of the tunnel. You can then climb up the wall and into a small cove by the side.

Secret Six: Right across from Secret Five is another cave. Just go around the wind tunnel, discover the secret, and hop back in to complete the level.

10: 8t88's Reward

Secret One: When you enter the ship near the beginning of the level, you'll ascend some stairs. Behind these stairs is this levels first secret area.

Secret Two: You'll reach a room with a couple of elevators. Take the one down to the cargo room full of crates. Jump on top of the crates. You'll see that one is under a hole in the ceiling.

Secret Three: After breaking into the fan, follow the ledge around it before going in. Tucked away on the other side is a secret mount.

Secret Four: When you're in the fan trying



GAMER'S EDGE



FAN OUT Go around this fan on Level 10 for one of the secret areas.

to get into the reactor core, you'll see a variety of dead-end ducts. One duct just beyond the door of the reactor core is the secret

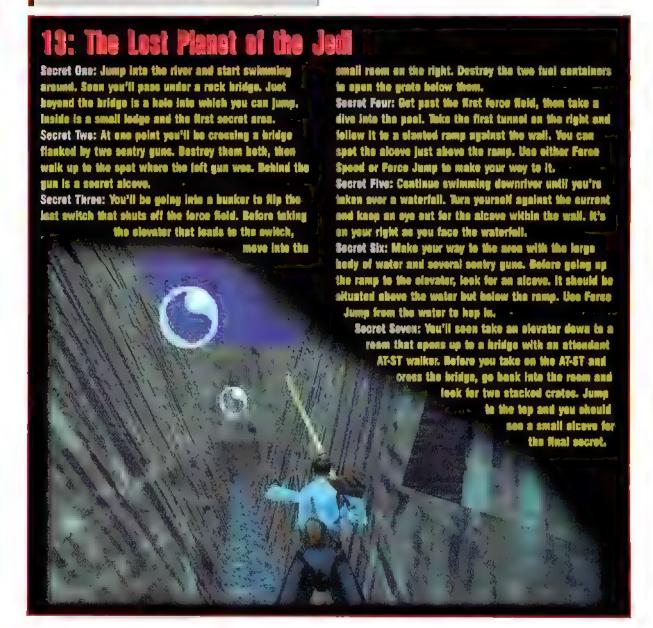
Secret Five: The secret here is another duct off to one side (Secrets Four and Pive are actually next to each other).

Secret Six: When you reach the bottom of the reactor core, open the grate with your lightsaher. As you make your way down the tunnel, turn the light on and move to the left. The path leads to an offshoot tunnel and the last secret in this level.

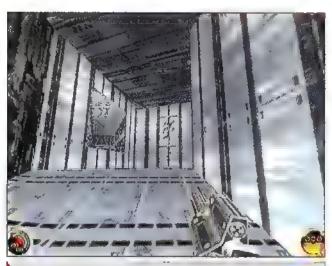
18: Descent Into the Valley

Secret One: Go down the first elevator and drop onto the floor with the cargo box. There is a small turbolift in that area. Take it up and you should see a small hole across the way

Secret Two: From Secret One, you can go into a tunnel leading to a



GAMER'S EDGE



BRING DOWN THE WALLS After the three green switches, destroy this wall in the rocky harlway of Level 18,



LEAP OF FATTH Make your way up to this area in Level 19, and you're near three secrets already.

15: The Falling Ship, or Into the Darkside Secret: There's only one secret on this level, which is good, because you have just three minutes to finish the level. When the level begins, move toward the door at the end, and look up and to the left. Enter this tunnel using either Force Speed or Force Jump.

room with a door on one side and a rump on the other. Look up to the ledge above you and use Force Jump to get there. Secret Three: You'll soon come across a room with a ramp and a large hole decorated with a black-and-yellow hazard horder. Go to the base of the ramp, turn so that you face the entrance you came in, and look up. Use Force Jump to reach that secret alcove

Secret Four: After discovering Secret Three, return to the first ramp. Before going up, go around and mader the ramp to find a broken panel. Destroy the panel, but keep a safe distance; it will explode.

Secret Five: At one point in the level, you'll walk past three green switches. After going down the nearby elevator, you'll end up in a rocky area. As you move down this rocky area, keep an eye on the left side. Some cracks on the wall should give away yet another secret

Secret Sec: Walk down the halfway and make your way to a room filled with crates. Look around and you'll see another cracked wall. Blow it up to get it the secret area.

Secret Seven: Later on, you'll reach a very parrow ledge marked with hazard colors. Follow this ledge all the way to the end for the final secret.

19: The Valley of the Jedi

Secret 6as: Take the first elevator to the floor with the two Stormtroopers. Hop behind the crates in the back to discover the first secret

Secret Two: When you reach the bottom floor, walk outside and circle around until you reach the lower of the two jutting ledges, Jump from the lower ledge to the higher ledge for the second secret.

Secret Three: From that same ledge, look up and you should see a small alcove tucked away in the rocks.

Secret Four: In this same area, there's a window with a shield power-up on it. Get off the ledge, stand outside the window, and Force Jump to it.

Secret Five: Take the large turbolift down, get off, and send it back up. Collect the goodies underneath.

Secret Six: After passing by the dall, you'll go down a circular landway leading to the right. At the point where you must go left, turn right to see the cracked dead-end wall. Destroy it Secret Seven: When you get to the room with the gray ramp,

Secret Seven: When you get to the foom with the gray ramp, look for the cracked wall nearby and destroy it

Secret Eight: When you enter the area with the ropes and weights, don't cut the first rope. Make your way to the second counterweight and look along the wall. Here is another breakable section. Then solve the puzzle at your leisure.

With all these secrets revealed to you, you should have the necessary complement of Force Stars to realize the full powers of the Force. Defeat Jerce for Light or Dark, and keep your lightsaber skills sharp until LucasArt's upcoming expansion disc. MYSTERIES OF THE STITE.

STRATEGY & TIPS

Age of Empires

This Means War!

by Elliott Chin

ast month, I walked you through
the most efficient manner of building a robust empire and sound
infrastructure. Unfortunately, conquest of the world isn't often
achieved without military conflict.
This month's strategies focus on
the nitly-gritly of combat — preparation
and engagement — because we all know
that it's always more satisfying to utterly
destroy a foe than to beat him with a
peaceful Wonder

The Basics

Before engaging in combat, it's a good idea to move your troops to one central location and then divide them by type,

such as cavalry, infantry, archers, and catapadts. Then, using the Ctil and number keys, assign a number to each group. When you need to issue commands to a group of units, you simply hit the appropriate number key, which automatically selects that group's units. This tactic is especially useful if enemy units swarm your attack force. If you hand box your whole force and try to issue commands that way, you might select and send both archers and infantry to attack, say, the enemy's elephants. You should send the infantry to take on the pachyderms and draw the archers back to deliver ranged fire. To do that, all you need to do is hit the number key for the infantry, target the elephants, and then quickly hit the number key corresponding to the archers. You could then pull them a safe distance away and attack the elephants.

Grouping umts prior to an offensive also allows you to better coordinate a combined-arms attack. You can group a small diversionary force to assail an enemy's walls, and then but the number key to bring in the archers and, later, the catapults, all without having to move the screen from the targeted wall. Combined with the use of waypoints,



SO WHAT IF IT'S UNFAIR Beat on enemy villagers and houses first to destroy your opponent's capacity for waging war.

groupings can make your military campaigns much more efficient.

Remember to scout the map early. It's imperative that you find out where your enemies' empires are and where excess resources are tocated. It's also important to find potential bottlenecks where you can erect defenses as well as vulnerable points that you can use for ambushes. It's a good idea to create and send out two chibmen early in the game. They'll derive the ordinary benefits of early scouting, but if they find an enemy camp, they can also do some crucial damage to the other player at this early juncture of the game.



HOLY CONVERSIONS, BATMAN! Research all the priest upgrades. They can become your most powerful units.

The Power of Religion

Priorie sie wildcard melts their can term the tide of buttle. The first rule in using priorie in to see them on mores. Build multiple temple and erank out serveral priorie. Create groups of three se that they can necessively their conversion efforts to increase their excess rate. Box't events importung, though, because all the private will week their faith founds.

Skirmishers and Upgrading

Once you've found the other players, start harassing them with skirmishers. In the Stone Age, your clubmen scouts can pick off a few enemy villagers. Once you move to the 'lool Age, send two or three scouts to harass the enemy camps. Scouts will reach the enemy faster than axemen, and speed is of the essence, since you don't want to give the enemy time to upgrade his defenses before you attack him again. In the Bronze Age, you can send a small group of cavalry to harass the enemy.

If you stick to small parties of three to four, these efforts shouldn't impact your own growth too negatively. However, by targeting villagers, houses, and farms, your skirmishers can stunt your enemy's growth quite significantly. At the very least, you'll force him to divert scrious resources to both rebuilding what you destroy and to building adequate defenses.

Another aspect of the game is just as important as scouling and early engagement: upgrading your units. This is especially important if you are going to harass the enemy early on. Decide on which unit types you want to use as skirmishers, and then research weapon- and armor-upgrades for each of those unit types.

For example, when using archers, it is vital to research ballistics once you have access to at. Woodworking also helps by giving you increased how-range

The Wonder of It All

If You Build It. You Will Win.

On larger maps, sepecially with multiple players, It's hard to achieve a military victory. In these cases, a Wender victory is your heat het for winning. Here are some tips for Wender construction.

First, don't build a Wonder unless you can defend it. Make sure you have enough atone to support several towers and walls for guarding your Wonder once you finish building it.

Once you start the task, don't just lowe the construction to one lone villager. Concentrate all of your villagers on the construction, because each one will quicken the Wender's completion. This tactic is sepecially important if you are racing with another player in finish a Wender. If you have enough workers on the project, you could beat your exponent even if he storts building first.

Once you've huilt the Wender, close it off with a ring of walls and towers. Keepsens villagers within the walls to repair the Wender in the event that it cames under attack. Keep a few cavalry units handy on the outside of this wall to decirey any incoming outspults that might some to take out your Wender. Also keep some entapults incide the wall as added muscle. Catapults will sput and attack units that are out of the towers' range. Keep archers around to share up your defenses.

Sunder the Wonder

If you need to destroy your apponent's Wonder, then you need to precoed quickly, but cautiously. Once you got the message that semesne her similar canetresting a Wonder, it's time to call a conference with the other players and coase heefliffee. Nothing benefits the Wonder-holding player more than having his enomies divided against him.

Once you got the first message, start building a large force. Den't penic, because you have at least 15 minutes to prop your attack force and more in.

Assuming you are relatively free to build an invasion force, start concentrating on herse archers and catapults. It's not so essential that you have cavalry and infentry in your Weeder-ameeling force. Make sure you group your units by type, and then move to the wells and towers guarding the enemy Wender. Although eatapults will be important, the herse archers are key to taking down whatever troops are welting incide or autside the Wender's protective well.

Let's accume that the other player is smart enough to have a mix of cotopults,:

archers, and eavairy—hacked up by towers—guarding his Wonder. Your catapults and herse archers should target the enemy catapults first. Once they are destroyed, immediately target the enemy tweers with your entapults. The archers should attack enemy archers and then eavairy or infantry. Only after you've cleared the area of enemy troops and towers should you destroy the enemy walls. Finally, move in with your entire invasion force and take out the Wender. The key is to use the enemy's wall to your advantage. Don't break it down early because then you'll let leave his covery to pick apart your hand of entapults and herse archers. Simply precent recthodically and ignore the composition to race through the enemy's delenses.

On the appealse and of this, the player protecting the Wonder might be better off deleting his own walls and massing his troops to destroy the enemy's relatively fragile catapults and herse archers.



THIS IS HOW IT'S DONE You can atorm enemy fortifications by using a combined force of cataputts and horse archers to wipe out the enemy's cataputts and units.

GAMER'S EDGE

How or What Do You Fight?

Once you've decided to bring your full military might to bear on your opponent, it's fime to start thinking about your supply lines. It takes too much time to build an army in your town and then move it to your foe's town. Once you've committed to an assault, send a few villagers to your enemy's town periphery and build some military buildings, Co for two or three stables and archery ranges, as well as a few siege workshops and temples. You can then crank out tmops and have them ready at the front lines immediately. You should also have the villagers

build a few towers to guard this military camp.

Once you start attacking or turnssing the enemy, there are certain targets that always take precedence. After clearing away the enemys immediate defenders and towers, go for his villagers and houses. It's really not worth it to attack military buildings at this point. By destroying villagers and houses, you prevent your foe from gathering resources that he needs to rebuild his army, and you lower his unit limit, forcing him to build houses rather than new troops. You should also attack the low-hit—point farms, which makes your foe's rate of food production decline. Plus, he will need to devote 75 would to rebuilding each farm.



WAR MACHINE When you decide that it's time for war, start building multiple military buildings near enemy borders.

After you've cleared away these targets, you can move on to military buildings. The military building that takes precedence over all others is the temple. This vile building spawns the annoying priest unit, which can turn your own troops against you. Destroy it before all other buildings. After you've destroyed the temple, move on to the siege workshops, academies, stables, barracks, and archery ranges.

On Offense and Defense

There are many advantages to going on the offensive You can locate your opponents early on, stunt their growth, and after their playing strategy. You can also stamp them out of the game early if you are really aggressive. If you embark on this strategy, the best units to use an your sweep are upgraded cavalry units and horse archers. Both are quick, and horse archers provide devastating fire support for the powerful cavalry mats. (For dismantling enemy walls and protective towers, follow the guidelines for razing enemy Wonder defenses in the "Wonder of It All" sidebar.)

A defensive stance, though, isn't a bad strategy, particularly if you play evilizations with production bonuses, such as the Shang Assyrian, and Yamato. In these cases, research walls and towers quickly, and build an archery range and a siege workshop to supplement your stationary defenses with mobile, ranged units. Academy units are also excellent for defense, due to their powerful attack and high hit-points.

Do not erect protective walls right next to towers. Leave about five tiles of space between the towers and walls, and place archers immediately behind the wall to fire at incoming catapults and troops. Multiple levels of walls (stacking them two tiles thick), is also great for defense because it buys you more time to whittle away at the enemy with your archers and towers while be's trying to back through your barracades.

If you follow these guidelines on the art of war in AGE OF EMPIRES, you should have no problem destroying any foe! §

Liethanis: The theat Deante

ou might have noticed that I don't mention using elephants in this article. That's because I never use them. It's been written elsewhere that elephants and elephant archers are the ultimate units. They do have tremendous hit points and do a good.

deal of damage. However, on the flip side, they are incred by expensive they can't upgrade their attack strengths, and they're very slow. If I have to face elephants. I usually counter them with upgraded academy units. I'm not saying that elephants shouldn't be used; I just and horse-based units more economical and efficient.



MISSION POSSIBLE The rossion editor in Faying Corps Goud allows you to create single missions or entire campaigns.

>>> Continued from pg 237

was still working on the program as this article went to press, so perhaps they'll get the TCP/IP support worked out. But for the time being, don't buy FIMING CORPS GOLD just for Internet play.

Both of these features, as well an improved view system, smarter Al, and support for the CH Force FX joystick, are available in the patch. Along with two new planes (a French Spad and the Fokker DVII), the biggest improvement in the GOLD version is a full-featured, easy-to-use editor that allows you to create not only new single missions, but also entire empaigns. You'll find nine new missions and a 12-mission campaign included as examples, and the editor will allow you to fly the user-created missions that are sure to pop up on the Internet soon.

ESSING CORES GOLD retails for \$44.95, but current PEYING CORPS owners can apprade to FIMING CORPS GOLD by sending \$15 to Empire Interactive, 580 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94104; by calling (415) 439-4854; or by emailing support@empire-us.com

RAPTOR REBORN

Mission Studios has followed a similar model with its JETFICETIER HI F-22 Raplor simulation -a free patch that adds 3D support and other features, along with a commercial add-on with new missions and a mission editor

JETPICITIER III is an MS-DOS program, so Direct3D support isn't an option. Instead, the patch adds support

for 3Dfx Vondoo-based (but not yet Voodoo Rush) graphics cards. A while back Mission also announced that support was planned for Rendition Vérité-based cards, That hasn't happened yet. though Mission says its still in the works

As you'd expect, 3Dfx card users are treated to much more attractive graphics. Cloud and haze

effects are nothing short of spectacular, and afreraft and terrain look much better. The biggest improvement, though, is in the sense of speed. With the original version of the sim, you had to run the game at a fairly low resolution to get a smooth frame rate. Now, graphics smoothly flow by on 3Dfx-equipped systems - flying low near inminiatus is breathtakingly real. There's also a framerate boost on MIMX systems, but it's not as dramatic

The flight models, while still sampler than those in F-22 RAPTOR and F-22 Air. DOMINANCE, FIGHTER, are somewhat improved. High-altitude performance is more authentic, and rudders are now realistically ineffective at high speeds. Targeting has been improved with the ability to designate ground targets and a warning X that lets you know when a missile is out of its firing envelope.

The most noticeable change to the

sim engine is the addition of the F-14 Tomcal to the stable of arreraft you can fly Equipped with the long-range Phoenix missile, Tomeats are great for knocking out bombers before they can become a threat to your carrier group.

All of these features are available in the free patch. If you purchase the PEATINEM EDITION, you also get new campaigns (over 200 missions) and scenery areas (20 million square miles, meluding Alaska, China, Korea, Japan, and Turkey). The PLATINEM EDITION includes every mission from the IET-FIGHTER III campaign disc, as well.

There's also on in-depth, fairly easy-touse editor that lets you ereate very elaborate missions. With all of the mission conditions (which you can set up) and the wide range of scenery areas available, Lexpect to see some very interesting missions popping up on the Net soon.

There's still room for improvement, though The action-oriented JETFICHTER senes cries out for multiplayer support; and, of course, a Windows 95-native exeentable would be welcome as well There's still no way to get an external view of other planes in the sim. And the simstill pauses when it loads scenery unless you manually copy CD files to the hard disk - Mission Studios needs to meltide an option to automatically preload the appropriate seenery area before a mission. if you have the hard-drive space, à la LONGBOW 2

INTEGRIER III PLANNUM EDITION sells for \$35. Various upgrades for owners of JerPoster III and the JPIII ENHANCED CAMPAIGN CD are available and range from \$10 to \$20. For apgrade details, check out Mission's Web site at www.missionstudios.com %

TOP GUN The free JETFISHTER III patch adds the F-14 Tomcat to the stable of planes available for you to fly.

GAMER'S EDGE

STRATEGY & TIPS

Myth

How to Win at the Most Difficult Strat Game of the Year

by Greg Fortune

"The skillful commander takes up a position in which he cannot be defeated and misses no opportunity to overcome his enemy. Thus, a victorious army always seeks battle after his plans indicate that victory is possible under them, whereas an army destined to defeat fights in the hope of winning but without any planning." —Sun Tzu, The Art of War

f you want to be successful while playing MYTH, memorize this quote. Simply to survive in MY111 regulres a level of strategy imprecedented in real-time games. We'll use these pages to help beginning MYIII players who are having trouble making it through the levels and keeping more than one or two units alive. We'll cover controls, factics, and formations, and we'll walk you through the Crow's Bridge mission in order to demonstrate these principles in action. This guide will not give you the solutions to all the scenarios in MY111, but it will provide you with the foundation to win them on your own



In Control

If you have to look away from the screen

to find the button you need, you need to adjust your control setup. Some commands, like assigning and recalling custom groupings, cannot be reconfigured, so you'll need to get used to the defaults. For the most part, however, you can customize the controls. In particular, pay attention to how your view adjustments are set, as they are the most critical controls to master.

Gesture clicking is also an important skill to learn if you want to be successful at MYTH. It's composed of three steps. (1) clicking where



you want the selected units to move, (2) holding the mouse button down while moving the mouse in the direction you want the units to face, and (3) moving the mouse and letting go of the button. The selected units will move to the spot that you've indicated, arrange themselves in the requested formation (if any), and face in the prede-

termined direction

ay of the Land

The handles terrain better than any other game i've seen. Not only does the type and elevation of ground you're on affect movement rates, but it also modifies your "to-hit" chances, range (for projectile and thrown weapons), and defense values. Almost without exception, you should seek out the high ground. In particular, look for areas where the enemy's movement toward you is hampered or ebstructed and you have a clear line of fire at them. These are great places for ambushes and traps, and they are key to keeping veterans in your army,

Eye in the Sky

You must master view control. Since your point of view is not directly overhead and the control manually prevents you from having an uninhibited, static view of your troops, you will need to master perspective-rotation. If you are just panning left and right, forward and backward, you are massing the boat. These methods will get you to where the battle is, but they won't automatically give you the best

GAMER'S EDGE

perspective on the action. If you find these view controls awkward, try remapping them to different keys. Whatever you do, make sure you can move and twist the view at will

Birds of a Feather Die Together

There's one last thing I want to cover before we look at our Crow's Bridge example: grouping units. The best thing you can do with any of your units is to group it with another unit that complements its strengths and weaknesses. Archers should never be left alone without some sort of escort, preferably warnors or berserks. Melee units benefit greatly by having archers around to weaken the enemy before they can close to fighting range.

There is one unit that gets the ugly stepchild award, and that's the dwarf Dwarves are surly, loudmouthed, and very careless about where they throw their bombs. If you are going to group dwarves with other unit types, particularly those that like to suddenly run out into battle, you'd better keep the little buggers on a short leash.

How do you keep all of these units under control in the middle of a battle? The answer lies in custom formations. The name is misleading, because these formations have nothing to do with how units are arranged on the battlefield Custom formations, which I call groupings, have to do with assigning hotkeys to a group of units. Let's say that I want to divide my units into two groups, each composed of warriors, archers, and dwarves. I'll assign one hotkey to each lactical group and another to each type of unit in that group. Now I can select an entire group, tell it to move to a spot on the map, and quickly organize the units in that group by using the hotkeys and custom formations. If the enemy is closing in and I don't want the dwarves to bomb my own units. I can hit the botkey for the dwarves and then hit the spacebar to tell them to stop. This is a lot more efficient than trying to click on the dwarves in the middle of a fight

Look, We Found the Bodies!

Let's use the first mission, Crow's Bridge, as an example of how to put all



No socces at Acquest MOR YOU This you have seen between 4. With my com-

Dark Reign[®] Uprising¹¹ Total Annihilation™ What Do These Games Have In Common?

Command & Conquer"



GAMER'S EDGE

Standing Around the Campline

tions to Mrra, I've got two words for you: fou're dead.
Furnations that work are perfacts the greatest inconvellon in Mrra. Some people will tell you that the line formations are the
only ones you need. Don't haten
to these people. Each formation
has a use, and the better you
get, the chore uses you'll find
for them. For example, assume

you have a long line of warriors and are about to engage a mass of thraff. Just before the thraff reach your line, change the warriors' formation to a deep endisciement. The flanks of your line will wrap around the thraff, bringing every warriot to bear on the enemy. Try it a couple of lines and you'll get an idea of just how powerful formations

these control lips to use. You start the level with two warners running away from the bridge, four warriors guarding the road; and four warriors, four archers, and a dwarf waiting in the town square. Why are the two soldiers at the bridge running away? Ten thrall just walked out of the river and have taken up positions by the bridge.

First, let's look at the map. The area is mostly flat, with some rolling bills to either side of the road. The hills to the left of the road are spotted with trees, which obstruct archers, so take up a position on the big hill to the right of the road. Have the two warriors from the bridge join up with the four guarding the road, and make a long line at the bottom of the hill facing the thrall. Put these units in guard mode with the G key. Now tell all the units from town to bead for the hill. Assign a group hotkey for the archers and give the dwarf his own hotkey.

Once the reinforcements from town arrive at the hall, have the archers form a



251

The war begins February 1998

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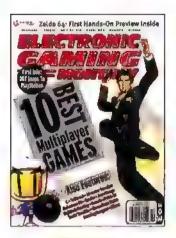
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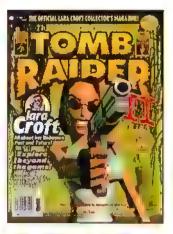


Welcome to the Other Side









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Want to take your console gaming to the next level? Then rely on EGM' to get you there with ease. EGM' is your source for the most in-depth strategies and coolest tips and tricks for all of the latest titles. Hardcore gamers will enjoy the Gamers' Forum, in addition to the variety of genres covered in the magazine. Look for the most recent issue of EGM', featuring a walkthrough for Capcom's newest PlayStation gem, Resident Evil 2, along with strategy for a slew of games for the PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Saturn. EGM' brings you the games by any means necessary.

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Can't get enough of the hottest polygonal babe to ever grace us with her presence? Then The Ultimate Guide to Tomb Raider II is the book for you. This one is far from being your run-of-the mill strategy guide, in fact it covers the entire Tomb Raider universe. It has everything from interviews with the development team to a look at what upcoming technology will do for games like Tomb Raider. This is in addition to the easy to use and in-depth Tomb Raider and Tomb Raider II strategy guides. Of course, this guide wouldn't be complete without an in-depth look at Lara Croft herself. Come take a look at the future of strategy guides

Console gaming is where it's at. Since this is the case, why not keep up to speed by reading the most reliable information in the galaxy? With the plethora of different magazines we have to offer, let us guide you to the other side.

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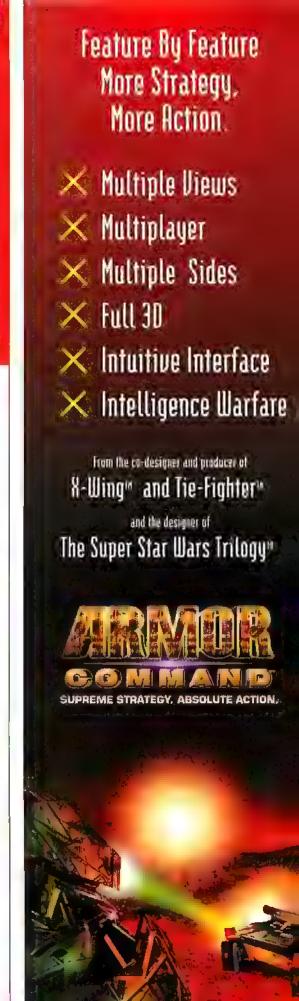
GAMER'S EDGE

short line at the top, facing the bridge. By this time, four ghôls should have come over the bridge to take up positions behind you. To defend against a flanking attack, have the four warnors from town form a long line behind the archers, protecting the archers rear flank.

Now comes the fun part. The thrall are slower than any other unit in the game, so send your dwarf down to the bridge and use him to attack the thrall standing there. When he's almost finished with them, evil reinforcements should arrive from the other side of the bridge. Draw the dwarf back to the main group, just in front and at one end of the main line of warnors. As the new enemies arrive, have your archers concentrate on the soulless, and let your dwarf eat into the thrall as they advance. Any thrall that does manage to make it to the warriors will be wounded and defenseless against your fresh troops. Before you know it, you'll be chasing after the tattered remains of your attackers.

That's all we have room for this month. If you're wondering where the multiplayer tips are, I've left them out for one reason: There's a lot of information online, Just go to www.bungle.com, and look for the links to related Web sites. You'll find a lot of great information there. I tappy hunting, and may all your dwarves be veterans! §







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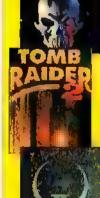
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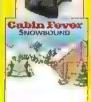


FIGHTER SQUADRON SCREAMIN DEMONS OVER EUROPE













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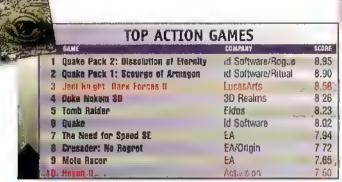
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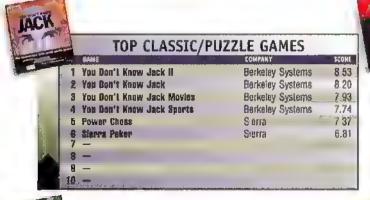


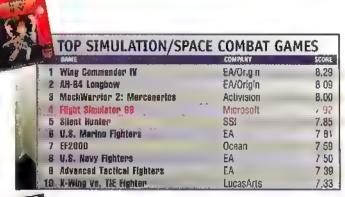
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			- CAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1		1	Gabriel Knight 2	S епта	8.21
		2	The Pandora Directive	Access	8 17
i ii		8	Наппа	Sterra	7.78
		4	Twinsen's Odyssey	Activision	7.77
			The Navarhood	DreamWorks	7.70
		8	Realms of the Haunting	Interplay	7.56
		7	Circle of Blood	Virgin	7 50
		8	Spycraft	Activision	7.43
			The Last Exgress	Broderbund	7.32
		10	Letsupe Suit Larry 7	Sierra	7.29





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	TOP SPORTS GAMES								
	1	MAMIL	COMPANY	SCORE					
	1	Links 15	Access	B.65					
	2	NASCAR Racing 2	Sierra	8.24					
	3	NHL 87	EA Sports	8.08					
	4	Brand Prix 2	MicroProse	7 97					
	6	NBA Live 97	EA Sports	7.96					
	B	Tripleplay 98	EA Sports	7.82					
	7	Jack Nicklaus 4	Accolade:	7.78					
N	à	Tripleplay 97	EA Sports	7.48					
	9	PGA Your Pro	EA Sports	7,41					
	10	NBA Live 80	EA Sports	7.37					

10.		TOP STRATEGY	GAMES	
Name of Street		CAME	COMPANY :	SCORE
_	1	Heroes II: Price of Loyalty	New World Computing	9 10
1	2	WarCraft II Expansion Disk	Bi zzard	8.85
100	8	Total Annihilation	GT Interactive	8 80
35	. 4	WarCraft II. Can Age,	Blizzard	8.74
	. 8	Heroes II	New World Computing	8.73
3	. 8	Red Alert	Virgin/Westwood	8.72
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1	8	Rad Alari: Counterstrika	Virgin/Westwood	8 42
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	10.	Civilization 8: Scenarios	MicroProse	8.19

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	2 Daggerfell	Bethesda 7.36						
	3 Ultima Onlina	Origin , - i .7.24						
	4 Aave of Dawn	New World Computing 7 10						
§ 1	6 —							
1	0							
	7 -							
2	8							
	9							
	10							

(Lies	TOP WARGA	AMES	
William Con	CAME	COMPANY	SCORE
بهندست	1 Steel Panthers II Campaign Disk	SSI	B.75
. 1	2 Steel Panthers Campaign Disk	SSI	8.65
	8 Steel Panthers II	SSI	8.36
	4 Battleground: Shiliph	TalonSoft	8 09
	6 Battleground: Bull Run	TalonSoft	8.02
	6 Tigers on the Prowl II	HPS	7.98
	7 Battleground: Antietam	TalonSoft	7.97
	6 Battleground: Napoleon in Russia	TalonSoft	7.95
	9 Battleground, Waterloo	TalonSoft	7.72
	10 Battlegenund: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	7.52

TOP 100 GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE		GAME	CHREAT	TOTE	SCO
1	Heroes II: Price of Loyalty	New World Computing	ST	9.10	51	The Neverhood	DreamWorks	AD	7.7
2	Quake Pack 2: Dissolution of Eternity	ld Software/Rogue	AC	8 95	52	Dungeon Keeper	EA/Builtrog	ST	7.6
3	Quake Pack 1: Scourge of Armagon	id Software/Ritual	AC	8.90	68	Moto Racer	EA	AC	7.6
4	WarCraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	ST	8 85	54	Property II	Activision	AC	7.6
ō	Total Annihilation	GT Interactive	ST	8 80	55	Jagged Alliance: Deadly Games	Sir-Tech	ST	7.5
8	Steel Panthers II Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	8 75		EF2000	Ocean	SI	7.5
7	WerCraft II	Blizzard	ST	8.74	57	Realms of the Haunting	Interplay	AD	7.5
B	Heroes II	New World Computing	ST	8,73	58	X-COM: Apocalypse	MicroProse	ST	7.5
8	Red Alert	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8 72	59	Battleground: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	WG	7
10	Civilization II	MicroProse	ST	8 71	86	Circle of Blood	Virgin	AD	7
11	Disblo	8l ₂ zard	RP	8.66		U.S. Nevy Fighters	EA	SI	7.
12		Access	SP	8 65	62	Tripleplay 97	EA Sports	SP	7.
-	Steel Panthers Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	8 65	68	Interstate '78	Activision	AC	7.
14	Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II	LucasArts	AC	o 58	84	MDK	Playmates/Shiny	AC	7
18	You Dan't Know Jack II	Berkeley Systems	CP	8,53	65	Spycraft	Activision	AD	7.
18	Red Alert: Counterstrike	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8 42	66	ENTOIL	MicroProse	ST	7
-		SSI	WG	8 36	67	PGA Your Pro	4 .	Sp	7
17	Steel Panthers II						EA Sports	SI	7
18	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	SI	8.29	88	Advanced Yactical Fighters	EA		
19	Duke Nukem 39	3D Realms	AC	8.26		Fantasy General	SSI	ST	7
20	NASCAR Racing 2	Sierra	SP	8 24		Imperialism	SSI	ST	7
21	Tomb Raider	Eidos	AC	8.23	71	Lords of the Realm II	Slerra	ST	7
2.2	C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8,22	72	IIBA LIVE 96	EA Sports	SP	7
28	Gabriel Knight 2	S'erra	AD	8.21		Power Chess	Sierra	ÇP	7
24	You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	CP	8 20	74	Daggerfall	Bethesda	RP	į
26	Civilization II: Scenarios	MicroProse	\$T	8,19		FPS Football Pro '98	Sierra	SP	7
26	The Pandora Directive	Access	AD	8,17	78	Ago of Rifles Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	7
27	AH-84 Langbow	EA/Origin	SI	8 09		X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter	LucasArts	ŞI	7
	Battleground: Shiloh	TalonSoft	WG	8.09	78	Last Express	Broderbund	AD	7
28	NHL 97	EA Sports	SP	8 08	79	Comanche 3	Novalogic	SI	7
80	Battleground: Bull Run	TalonSoft	WG	8.02		Shadows of the Empire	LucasArts	AC	7
	Quake	ti Software	AC	8.02	81	FPS Football Pro '97	Sierra	SP	7
32	MechWarrier 2: Mercenaries	Activision	SI	8.00		Star Fleet Academy	Interplay	SI	7
88		HPS	WG	7 98	83	Leisure Suit Larry 7	Sierra	AD	7
84		TalonSoft	WG	7.97	84	HFA AZ	EA Sports	SP	7
•	Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	SP	7.97		Robert E. Lee: Civil War General	Slerra	WG	7
86		EA Sports	SP	7.96	86	688(i) Hunter/Killer	EA/Jane's	SI	7
37	Battleground: Napoleon in Russia	TalonSoft	WG	7.95	B7	Pacific General	SSI	WG	7
88		EA	AC	7.94		Ultima Online	Origin	RP	
		Berkeley Systems	CP	7.93	89	Theme Hospital	EA/Bulifrog	ST	7
39				7.92	·		Sierra	AD	
40	Fight Simulator 98	Microsoft	SF		BO	Lighthouse Virtual Pool		SP	1
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44	Jack Nicklaus 4	Accolade	SP	7 78	94	Drumi A	Interplay	AC	7
	Rama	Sierra	AD	7 78	2.	Magic the Gathering	MicroProse	Sī	7
48		Activision	AD	7 77	98	Wipeont XL	Psygnosis	AC	7
47	You Den't Know Jack Sports	Berkeley Systems	CP	7.74	97	Flying Corps	Empire	Si	7
48		TalonSoft	WG	7.72	98	Anyli of Dawn	New World Computing	RP	7
	Crusader: No Regret	EA/Origin	AC	7.72		The Need for Speed II	EA	AC	7
	Dark Reign	Activision	ST	7.72	1	Privateer: The Darkening	Origin	SI	- 7

Games on unnumbered lines are tied with game on line above. Top game of type. Red New Game, AD = Adventure, RP = Role-Playing, SI = Simulation/Space Combat, ST = Strategy, WG = Wargame, AC = Action, SP = Sports. CP = Classic/Puzzle. Games are retired after two years and become eligible for the Hall of Fame.

WELCOME TO THE COOPERSTOWN OF COMPUTER GAMES. Note you'll find, raised upon pedestals, the games that broke the records, established the benchmarks, and held gamers in delighted trances for hours untold.

ALONE IN THE DARK (i-Molion, 1992) Lovecrattian horror goes 3D, with shifting camera angles adding to the creepy almosphere.

Battle Chess (Interplay, 1988)

The Frankfin Mint of computer chess games with violent and funny animation disguisting a solid chess engine.

BETRAVAL AT KRONBOR (Dynamix, 1993) As deh and imaginative as Raymond Feist's world itself; its 3D perspective was fresh.

CHESSMASTER (Software Toolworks, 1986) The Cadillac of castling, this chess masterplece gets better with each version.

DUNBEON MASTER (FT). Soltware, 1987) Trend-setting graphics, digitized

stereo, and great hack and stash from a decade ago.

DAY OF THE TENTACLE

(Lucas Arts, 1993) Offibeat singues to Mariac Marision; the interactive equivalent of a classic Chuck Jones carloon



Doom (id Software, 1993) Revolutionized PC action games and network gaming, surpassed in technology but not gameplay.

EARL WEAVER BASEBALL (EA. 1986)

Revolutionary physics-based baseball game that pleased both action and statistics fans.

EMPIRE (interstel, 1978)

WWII in space, this maintraine transplant brought elegant mechanics, depth, and unending replayability to the PC.

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER (MicroProse, 1988)

A "thinking man's" sim, with great missions, in which sneak ing around is as fun as doglighting.

FALCON 3.0 (Spectrum HoloByte, 1991)

Tough, detailed jet sim with ambilious At, graphics, and connectivity to match its realism

FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO

(Dynamix, 1993)

Physics-based system, good A., and unmatched career play make this the otherate in prosker play.

GETTYSBURG: THE TURNING POINT (SSI, 1986)

First variable order of ballie changed the look of all American Civil War games on the PC.

GUNSHIP (MICROPROSE, 1989) Great character continuity, H&R for falliqued pitots, and even sick leave best chopper fare until Jane's Longeow.

HARPOON (360 Pacific, 1989) In depth modern naval ballies in realtime, based on Cold War lears.

KAMPFORUPPE (SSI, 1985)

Armored warfare on WWill's Eastern Front, offered engaging battles on multiple piatforms.

KING'S QUEST V (Sierra On Line, 1990) Redelined the graphic adventure with non-text-based parser and VGA graphics.

LEMMINGS (Psygnosis, 1991)

The lovable cartoon colliquitians were real-time bits on every

LINKS 366 PRO (Access Software, 1992) Topped the leader board in graph cs and realism for

M-1 TANK PLATOON (M.croProse, 1989) Realistic sim that properly focused on armored forma Lons rather than single vehicles, good in salon designs.

MASTER OF MADIC (MICROPROSE, 1994) The atmosphere and variety of Masic: Tie Gathering with the

MASTER OF ORION (MicroProse, 1993)

Remarkable diplomatic Al; deep and yased technology tree, allens required radically different playing styles

MECH BRIBADE (SS), 1985)

sophistication of Civilization.

Modern armored badles with improved KAMPEGRUPPE system and more realism.

MIGHT & MAGIC (New World Computing, 1986)

First-person, maze-based RPG with hone environment and lough lacucal combat

M.U.L.E. (EA, 1983)

A landmark multiplayer strategy game that had no weapons of destruction, just cutthroat competition that made economics lun.

PANZER GENERAL (SSI, 1994)

A truly fun wargame with an elegant interface, great campaigns, strong Al. good graphics, and impressive sound.

RED BARDN (Dynamix, 1990)

WWI air combat with great graphics, Incredible realism, and a versatile replay feature.

SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION

(MicroProse, 1991) CGWs #1-rated game of all time; ndescribably addictive world conquest/ exploration barre.

SID MEIER'S PIRATES (MicroProse, 1987) Combines plrate advanture, action RPG, and strategy to make the most successful hybrid of all time.

SID MEIER'S RAILROAD TYCOON

(MicroProse, 1990) SimCity meets 1830 with robber barons for emphasis.

SIMCITY (Maxis, 1987)

Urban planning with fascinating consequences and challenges; the first great software loy.

STARFLIGHT (EA, 1986)

Depth, great characters, and a good scrift storyline set early slandards for RPGs.



THE BARD'S TALE (EA. 1985) Proneered three-point animation, 3D color mazes, and automapping

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

(LucasArls, 1990)

Cornedy adventure that set new standards in writing quality and social sensitivity.

Their Finest Hour (LucasArts, 1989)

WWII sim with great campaigns and crew member options some current sims lack.

TIE Fighten (LucasArts, 1994)
Most satisfying Star Wars space-combat game to date lets you live on the dark side

ULTIMA III (Origin Systems, 1983)

Coherency and surprising subtlety emphasized role-playing, and set the tone for later University

Ultima 1V (Origin Systems, 1985) High-concept NPG explored meaning of virtue and put the BOLE in role playing.

Ultima VI (Origin Systems, 1990) This RPG as morality play paved way for Ultima Origin's realistic environs and objects.

ULTIMA URBERWORLD

(Origin Systems, 1992)
The first Iruly 30 RPG, and still the most convincing; its dungeon walls were nicely "painted" with texture-mapped graphics.

WAR IN RUSSIA (SSI, 1984)

More realistic than Eastean Front, it captured the essence of the largest tand campaign in history.

WASTELAND

(Interplay, 1986) Derived from Mike Stackpole's Mercenarios, Spies, and Private Eyes. this is the definitive postapocalyptic

Wing Commander I

(Origin Systems, 1990) A hol space light engine, unfolding slory path, and great characters.

WING COMMANDER II

(Origin Systems, 1991)

Darker story, giftler feel sound card advances, and lougher At made this a sequel of sequels.

Wing Commander HI

(Origin Systems, 1994) Surprisingly satisfying FMV space opera didn't lose the essence of the space-combat game.

Wizardry (Sir-Tech Software, 1981)
Delined the computer RPG with maze-based viewpoint and almospheric spell names.

Wolfenstein 3-D (ld Software, 1992)

Smooth scrolling action blastlest cleverly updated the originat, and put shareware back on the map

X-COM (MicroProse, 1994)

Premier lactical squad-level engine combined with alien tech research and pop culture for a sol-fl game nearly as addic-

Zeak (Infocom, 1981)

The progenitor of adventure games on the PC; its humor and challenging puzzles seem timeless.

CGW ADVERTISER INDEX

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What's the Deal with...Netgaming Fantasies?

he dust is just beginning to settle
on Ultima Online, and regardless
of what else can be said about
Origin—a company that lived line
good life off of two years of press
releases and then handed an
unfinished land over to the rabid
Cyber cast of The Lord of the

Flies without even a "Beware, evildoers, the Avalar is watching"—I think some very important lessons can be learned from the experience, about the clash between the average consumer's expectations of Netgaming, and about the harsh realities of actually trying to play a game over the nully hodgepodge of misanthropic technology known as the Net.

After watching the Utrima affair unfold while the rest of the Netgaming industry teeters on the brink of bankruptcy, I have come to realize that the problem lies in the nature of the beast, as well as in the greedy hearts and overly optimistic minds of game providers.

The whole thing is akin to Ford showing a concept "car of tomorrow" in the "50s and all of us expecting to fly to work the next year. It just ain't happening. We've all been sold such a bill of goods about how cool and capable the internet is that we expect it to work as smoothly as it does on TV. The ugly truth is that for the most part, the Net as it is today is just not capable of supporting the kind of smooth gaming experience the aver age consumer is looking for, and expecting.

If you thought fooling around with your config files was tedious in the pre Win 95 days, just wait until you have to futz around for hours trying to figure out why your ultracool, new Net capable game keeps crashing your system every time you enter the gamer's chat area. Now, part of this is, without a doubt, due to some really bad multiplayer code being put out by game companies, as "Net capability" is still a big, last-minute gimmick thrown into games by nervous execs. But the rest of the problem is just the simple fact that regardless of what Bill Gates says, the Internet is still a rough place for software, and most of us are asking our proctologist to help us find our

are asking our proctologist to help us find our ISP. 22

.SP. Hell, it's only been a couple of years since modems have been able to speak the same protocol, the 56KB standard exists only on paper right now, and yet we're complaining that we can't play graphically intense games with our budd es from Tibet without a patch or two.

Anybody thinking seriously of spending server dollars on gaming should keep in mind two things: 1) That any Nelgame (or Netgame service) more complex than *Battleship* should be considered, as should the Internet itself, a work in progress; and 2) You can't always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need. In other words, be prepared to suffer through constant patches, and be open-minded enough to give a simpler game a chance, despite the fact you came for the glamour.

There are plenty of non 3D blastfest Netgames out there that are actually designed for the way the Net Is now instead of how we would like it to be. Activision's NetStorm may not offer the alternative lifesty eithrill of an Elf discussing the price of feather shoes with an Orc, but on the other hand, it works—and it brings out what the Net is good al—connectivity and continuity. It's a better use of your dollars to play a good game that works, than to sit around and gripe because your flight sim looks like a slide show.

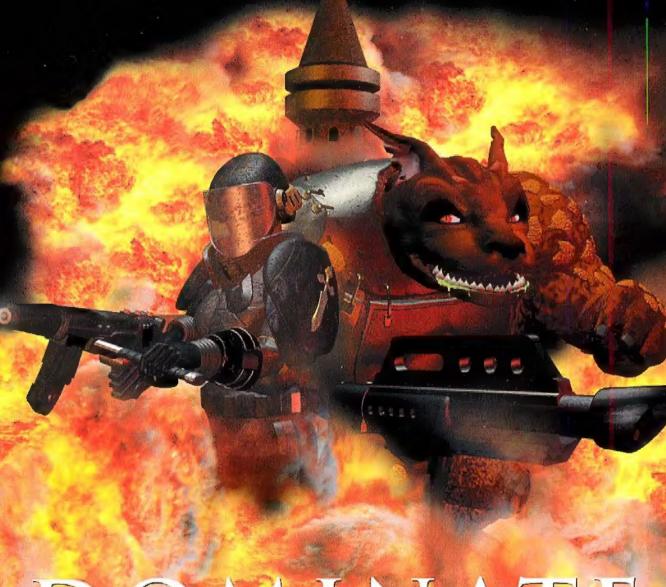
The bottom line is that, despite what any PR guy or overenthuslastic designer might tell you, Netgames are not a Plug-and-Play item yet, nor will they be until the basic technology stabilizes and we are all connected to fast, flat rate servers through our fiber-optic cable moderns. You may have your 50 something modern and your free game server, but it's not doing you much good if your ISP is charging you by the minute to route your data through a 200-baud cheese grater in Pakistan. Sitting there screaming at your fellow strategy gamers to hurry up because your meter is running, or swearing at designers because you've discovered that "action game" translates to "lag fest" is just not going to do much good.

Do your reading, figure out what your Net connections are actually capable of, and then decide if you want to pay somebody to participate in what is still a grand experiment. Once you come at Netgames with your eyes wide open, then you can let the coolness that really exists overwhelm you, instead of moving from one disappointing experience to another, simply because all you've known is the hype.

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